

GREAT OFFERS!



Scan to Subscribe

PAGE 2 CITY

LG Saxena, CM Rekha inaugurate 25 new Atal Canteens



PAGE 7 LAW & JUSTICE

Anil Ambani assures SC of cooperation in probe



PAGE 12: BUSINESS

'Global' impact in bilateral deals



PAGE 15 GLOBAL

Ex-South Korean President gets life sentence for martial law



PAGE 18 SPORTS

Bennett, Raza power Zimbabwe to 6-wicket win over Sri Lanka



PIONEER IN SHORT

INDIA ATTENDS TRUMP'S GAZA BOARD

India attended the inaugural meeting of US President Donald Trump's Board of Peace on Gaza on Thursday as an observer. The meeting was held at the Donald J Trump Institute of Peace in Washington, DC, with India represented by Charge d'affaires Namgya Khampa. India has not joined the Board, which Trump set up to support the redevelopment of the Gaza Strip. The US has pledged \$10 billion to the initiative, which includes 27 member nations such as Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Hungary, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE. The Board aims to coordinate funding, development, and humanitarian projects in Gaza while fostering broader regional stability. Prime Minister Narendra Modi was among the global leaders invited to join the Board, announced as part of the second phase of a ceasefire agreement between Israel and Hamas in Gaza. India had not been present at the January 22 Davos ceremony where Trump unveiled the initiative. The Board of Peace is seen as a potential rival to the UN. Trump has suggested it "might" replace the UN, citing the organisation's failure to meet its full potential in fostering global peace.

## MANAV vision to anchor India's AI push: PM Modi

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA  
New Delhi

Inaugurating the AI Impact Summit 2026 at the Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi on Thursday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi called for ethical use of AI. Addressing a galaxy of world leaders, global CEOs, industrialists, innovators and AI stakeholders, PM Modi said, "Artificial Intelligence represents a transformation of the same magnitude as historic turning points in human civilization."

Also present at the inauguration were President of France Emmanuel Macron, Secretary General of United Nations, Brazil President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, Sri Lanka President Anura Kumara Dissanayaka and Bhutan Prime Minister Tshering Tobgay. Mauritius Prime Minister Navinchandra Ramgoolam, Croatia Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic, Serbia President Aleksandar Vucic, Seychelles Vice President Sebastien Pillay, Estonia President Alar Karis,



Prime Minister Narendra Modi joins hands with Google CEO Sundar Pichai, OpenAI CEO Sam Altman and others during the India AI Impact Summit 2026, in New Delhi

and Finland Prime Minister Petteri Orpo were among others at the event. PM said India is bringing together technology leaders and policymakers across the globe to deliberate on the future of artificial intelligence.

Highlighting that the scope for unethical behaviour is limitless in AI, PM Modi put forward suggestions for

ethical use of AI including respecting data sovereignty, clear and transparent safety rules for platforms and bringing human values to AI. "Technology may be powerful, but direction will always be determined by human beings," he said.

The PM also presented a vision for AI and named it MANAV with M standing for

moral and ethical systems, A for accountable governance, N for national sovereignty, A for accessible and inclusive, V for valid and legitimate.

Highlighting the urgent need for global standards, the PM pointed out that deepfakes and fabricated content are destabilising open societies.

CONTINUED ON >> P4

## AI must bridge divides, not deepen them, says Macron

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
New Delhi

In the face of increasing geopolitical tensions, there is a growing sense of urgency to direct all digital tools towards an inclusive approach and India and France will jointly work to build a framework for artificial intelligence by combining innovation with responsibility and technology with humanity, French President Emmanuel Macron said on Thursday.

In his address at the AI Impact Summit here, Macron said France and India share a common vision for developing a "sovereign AI" to protect the planet and foster prosperity for all.

"At a time when tensions are rising, there is an increased sense of urgency to direct all our digital tools towards this inclusive approach. And in order, indeed, to be strong here in India, but to be strong as well on the African continent," he said.

"Let's focus together on bridging rather than dividing, creating rather than destroying, sharing rather than taking. France intends to



France President Emmanuel Macron addresses the gathering during the India AI Impact Summit 2026, in New Delhi

use its G7 Presidency to foster that vision," he added. Macron said France, as the current G7 chair, will work towards ensuring protection of children against AI and digital abuse.

"This is why in France we are embarking on a process to ban social networks for children aged under 15 years. We are committed in this journey with several European countries being present here today, (including) Greece, Spain," he said.

"I know, Mr Prime Minister, you will join this club. This is great news that India will join such an approach in order to protect children and teenagers. We stand ready to take all necessary actions to ensure that our young citizens are truly safe," he said, apparently to Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Describing India as a major player in the artificial intelligence (AI) domain, the French president underlined the need for rules to govern use of AI.

The Bystander



Britain's Prince Andrew saluting during his 2012 visit on the Indian aircraft carrier INS Viraat at the Western Naval Command in Mumbai

## British prince arrested in UK over misconduct

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
London

Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor, the younger brother of King Charles III, was arrested by the UK police on Thursday on suspicion of misconduct in public office following allegations over his links with convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein.

The King issued a statement from Buckingham Palace to express his "deepest concern" as the news of the arrest hit the headlines, stressing that the "law must take its course".

"I have learned with the deepest concern the news about Andrew Mountbatten-

Windsor and suspicion of misconduct in public office," the King's statement reads.

"What now follows is the full, fair and proper process by which this issue is investigated in the appropriate manner and by the appropriate authorities. In this, as I have said before, they have our full and wholehearted support and cooperation.

"Let me state clearly: the law must take its course. As this process continues, it would not be right for me to comment further on this matter. Meanwhile, my family and I will continue in our duty and service to you all," he said.

CONTINUED ON >> P4

## BILL GATES CANCELS AI SUMMIT KEYNOTE

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
New Delhi

Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates cancelled his keynote address at the AI summit hours before he was due to take stage on Thursday. The move came less than 48 hours after the Gates Foundation had insisted: "Bill Gates is attending the AI Impact Summit. He will be delivering his keynote as scheduled."

Hours before his keynote, the Gates Foundation posted on X, "The Gates Foundation will be represented by Ankur Vora, President of Africa and India Offices, who will speak later today at the Summit. After careful consideration, and to ensure the focus remains on the AI Summit's key priorities, Mr Gates will not be delivering his keynote address."

CONTINUED ON >> P4

## SC flags fiscal stress of populist schemes

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
New Delhi

The Supreme Court (SC) on Thursday slammed announcement of freebies and subsidies ahead of elections and said it was time to revisit policies that hamper the country's economic development. Observing that the ultimate financial burden of such populist measures falls squarely on the shoulders of taxpayers, a bench headed by Chief Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant asked, "But this money which the State says it will pay now. Who will pay for it? This is taxpayers' money."

The observations were made during the hearing of a petition filed by the Tamil Nadu Power Distribution Corporation Limited (TNPDC), which proposed to give free electricity to all irrespective of



WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

consumers paying capacity. Tamil Nadu Government-owned TNPDC was challenging the Union Government on Rule 23 of the Electricity (Amendment) Rules, 2024. Rule 23 imposes strict financial discipline on power distribution companies.

"It is understandable when

some people cannot afford, you have to provide. There are children who cannot afford education, so the State must provide. It is the State's duty. There are children who are bright but cannot afford to go to medical colleges. The State must help them. But the people who can enjoy, have

all means available and are affluent and therefore any kind of freebie first comes to their pocket. Is it not high time for the States to revisit these policy frameworks," the CJI asked.

The bench, also comprising justices Joymalya Bagchi and Vipul M Pancholi, warned that the indiscriminate distribution of largesse is hampering the nation's economic development and straining State exchequers already reeling under massive revenue deficits.

"We will be hampering the development of the nation if we keep on having this largesse distribution. There has to be a balance. But how long will this continue?" the CJI asked. Tamil Nadu will go to polls this year.

CONTINUED ON >> P4

Experience the vibrant heritage of Arunachal Pradesh through its indigenous crafts, handwoven textiles, bamboo artistry, tribal jewellery, authentic cuisine, cultural performances, ethnic fashion showcase and more at

# Festival of ARUNACHAL 2026

Organized by Department of Tourism, Govt of Arunachal Pradesh With the support of Ministry of Tourism, Government of India

**On 21-22nd February 2026** **At Dilli Haat, INA, New Delhi**

Exhibition Open from 10:30 AM onwards  
Open to All. Come, celebrate the spirit of India's Eastern Frontier.

Department of Tourism, Arunachal Pradesh  
+91-11-23010867

www.arunachaltourism.com  
festival\_of\_arunachal\_2026

FestivalofAP  
festivalofarunachal2026



## Commuters stuck for hours amid AI summit restrictions

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
New Delhi

For the fourth consecutive day, commuters in Delhi complained on Wednesday of traffic snarls across various parts of the Capital, with some alleging they had been "stuck for hours" owing to peak-hour jams as special restrictions were enforced for the AI Impact Summit 2026 at Bharat Mandapam. The curbs were imposed due to the movement of VIPs between Bharat Mandapam, the airport, and other key locations in the Capital. The Delhi Traffic Police had announced restrictions in two time slots, from 7.30 am to 10 am and from 5 pm to 9 pm. The impact was visible throughout the day. The evening rush hour saw long traffic snarls across Lutyens' Delhi. A massive traffic jam was

reported on Prithviraj Road on Thursday morning following movement restrictions linked to the summit. Vehicles moved slowly on key stretches. Visuals from Sunehri Bagh and Sansad Marg showed cars crawling bumper to bumper. Several important roads were affected. These included Sardar Patel Marg, Mother Teresa Crescent, Teen Murti Marg, and Akbar Road. Janpath and Windsor Place also witnessed restrictions. Tees January Marg, Prithviraj Road, and Rajesh Pilot Marg saw heavy congestion. Subrahmanian Bharti Marg was also impacted. Mathura Road, between Lodhi Flyover and Dr Dinesh Chandra Dalmia Chowk, experienced long delays. Traffic was restricted on Bhairon Marg and Shanti Path. Africa Avenue and Satya Marg, between Yashwant Place and Shanti Path, were also affect-



(Left) Vehicles stuck in a traffic jam on the Indraprastha road near Bharat Mandapam; (right) Vehicles crawl amid a heavy traffic jam near Akshardham temple amid the ongoing AI Impact Summit 2026



ed. Dr. Zakir Hussain Marg, Gurugram Road, and Parade Road remained under watch due to VIP movement. Many commuters reported being stuck for long periods due to sudden stoppages. Rohit, who was travelling from South Delhi to Connaught Place, said his usual 30-minute drive took over an hour. "We were halted near Teen Murti for a long time. There was no movement," he said. Neha Verma, heading towards the airport, said traffic came to a complete stop near Sardar Patel Marg. "Police cleared the road for a convoy. All vehicles were waiting," she said. The chaos was not limited to Thursday. On February 18, a social media user posted on X about similar delays. The user wrote, "Delhi traffic at its worst! Left Noida at 2 PM for

Airport Terminal 1. Traffic has been stopped near AIIMS for the past 30 minutes due to VIP movement. It's still showing another hour to reach the airport." Many residents said the situation on Thursday felt similar to Wednesday. Office-goers and airport-bound passengers faced long waiting times. The traffic police had earlier issued an advisory asking commuters to plan their journeys in advance. People were told to avoid affected stretches and follow instructions given by per-

sonnel on duty. Alternate routes were suggested to reduce inconvenience. These included San Martin Marg, Panchsheel Marg, and Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Road. Kamal Ataturk Marg and Aurbindo Marg were also advised. Lodhi Road, Barapullah Road, and Ring Road were listed as diversion options. Tilak Marg, Feroz Shah Road, Rafi Marg, and Sansad Marg were also recommended. K Kamraj Marg, South Avenue Road, and Vandematram Marg were suggested as alternatives. For Gurugram-bound traffic, NH-48, Rao Tula Ram Marg, Old Delhi-Gurugram Road, UER-II, and the NH-48 service road were advised. Despite these measures, congestion spread to parts of South and East Delhi. Traffic police personnel were deployed at major intersections.

## US CEO's big AI summit night ends with room service after 4-hour traffic gridlock

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
New Delhi

It was meant to be an evening of policy, possibility and powerful conversations. Instead, it ended with a late-night room service tray. Sara Hooker, the US-based CEO of Adaption Labs, had flown in to attend the high-profile AI Impact Summit dinner hosted by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The gathering promised a curated guest list of global artificial intelligence leaders, policy-makers and innovators—the kind of room where future collaborations are sketched between courses. Caught in a massive traffic snarl in the national capital, the tech executive spent nearly four hours inching through clogged roads as



security arrangements and heavy vehicular movement brought key stretches of the city to a near standstill. By the time it became clear she would not reach the venue in time, the summit dinner was already under way. At around 11 pm, instead of exchanging ideas on frontier AI systems, Hooker was scanning a hotel menu.

The contrast was hard to miss, a global leader in cutting-edge artificial intelligence—a field built on efficiency, optimisation and speed—stalled by an old-world urban bottleneck. The irony quickly became a talking point in tech and policy circles. The AI Impact Summit was designed to spotlight India's growing influence in the

global AI ecosystem. With government officials, startup founders and multinational executives in attendance, the dinner hosted by the Prime Minister was positioned as a key networking moment. For many invitees, it was a rare chance to engage directly with India's top leadership on artificial intelligence strategy and cross-border collaboration. Hooker, whose work focuses on advanced AI systems and responsible deployment, was expected to be among those voices contributing to the dialogue. Instead, her evening became an unintended reminder that even in an era of machine learning and predictive algorithms, some variables—like metropolitan traffic—remain stubbornly analogue.

## Police arrest sharpshooter Bobby Kabootar

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
New Delhi

The Delhi Police's Special Cell has arrested sharpshooter Bobby Kabootar, wanted in multiple murder cases, including last year's killing of two brothers in northeast Delhi, and a woman allegedly linked to the Lawrence Bishnoi gang. Special Cell sources said on Thursday that the woman was apprehended along with alleged sharpshooter Mahfooz Ali (45), alias Bobby Kabootar, near the Mahipalpur flyover in southwest Delhi. According to the police, the arrests were made following inputs about the movement of the accused persons. "A trap was laid in the Mahipalpur area, and the SUV in which they were travelling was intercepted around midnight on Tuesday. Firearms were allegedly recovered during the operation, and the



accused were booked under relevant provisions of the Arms Act," the sources said. The woman was also allegedly found in possession of drugs. Officials said she is being questioned about the gang's suspected narcotics network and her role in facilitating its activities. The sources said that she was part of the gang and had been under surveillance for some time before her arrest. Police said she projected herself as a makeup artist and operated a beauty parlour in

northeast Delhi, leading investigators to suspect that the establishment was used as a front while she remained involved in the gang's operations. "Her exact role in the syndicate is being ascertained. Kabootar, who was arrested in the same operation, has been wanted in multiple criminal cases, including at least six murder cases. Among the prominent cases linked to him is the December 16, 2025, double murder of two brothers — Fazeel and Nadeem — in northeast Delhi's Jafraabad area," the source said. According to investigators, 48 rounds were fired at the victims while they were travelling on a scooter, with around 35 bullets hitting them. One of the brothers died on the spot, while the other succumbed to injuries at a hospital. Police sources have also claimed that Kabootar is

wanted in connection with the killing of Punjabi singer-rapper Sidhu Moosewala. He is suspected of having conducted reconnaissance of the singer's movements days before the murder. Investigators are examining whether the firearms used in that case were sourced through him and his associates. Kabootar is also suspected to be linked to the September 2024 murder of gym owner Nadir Shah in the Greater Kailash area. Police believe he may have provided logistical support to the shooters in that case. Both murders were allegedly carried out at the behest of gangster Lawrence Bishnoi, with the Hashim Baba gang believed to be closely associated, sources said. Kabootar had been on the Delhi Police's wanted list for nearly a decade and had been evading arrest for a long time.

## Thefts force DMRC to replace copper cables with aluminium

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
New Delhi

Repeated thefts of copper signalling and power cables seem to have forced the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) into a strategic overhaul of its network. The corporation plans to replace copper wiring with aluminium across 175 kilometres of its system to "theft-proof" the network. The DMRC will invest Rs 32.59 crore over the next 18 months to swap 33-kilovolt (kV) copper wiring for aluminium. According to the corporation officials, existing 33 kV copper cables will be



removed and replaced with aluminium cables (1CX400 sq mm), which will be laid in trefoil formation along metro viaducts. The overhaul targets the most vulnerable sections of the network, including the Yamuna Bank line near the riverbed, the Airport Express Line and the Pink Line near

Seelampur and Welcome stations. The DMRC said the project aims to improve the reliability of the auxiliary power supply. Copper thefts have frequently caused power supply failure and signalling disruptions, forcing trains to operate at restricted speeds and causing delays. Last year, 89 instances of cable theft cases were reported. Of these, 32 involved signalling cables and 22 involved electrical wiring. One major incident in March last year between Seelampur and Welcome stations severely disrupted the signalling system, forcing

trains to slow to 25 km/h between Mansarovar Park and Seelampur. The disruption caused a cascading effect across the Red Line, delaying commuters' journeys for the entire day. The metro system depends on hundreds of kilometres of cables running through viaducts and tunnels to support traction, telecommunication and electrical systems. Any damage to these cables causes unwarranted delays. Replacing damaged cables during operation hours is challenging and risky, as trains operate every three to five minutes. Despite previous preven-

tive measures, including cementing cables, installing anti-theft clamps and using concertina coils, thefts have continued. As recently as on January 11 this year, thieves cut around 800 metres of signalling cable on the Airport Express Line between Dhaura Kuan and Shivaji Stadium. The damage forced trains to operate at restricted speeds on the up line towards New Delhi. By switching to aluminium, we expect to make the infrastructure a less attractive target for thieves while ensuring punctuality and reliability of its services, the officials added.

## 182 FIRs registered against violators for wrong-side driving

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
New Delhi

The Delhi Traffic Police has registered 182 FIRs against violators for wrong-side driving from January 3 to February 9, with the New Delhi Range recording the highest number of cases. In Delhi, driving on the wrong side of the road is no longer being treated as a minor traffic violation but as a serious and life-threatening offence, a senior police officer said. The figures translate to an average of five FIRs being lodged every day against motorists found driving against the designated flow

of traffic. According to official data, the highest number of cases, 53, were registered in the New Delhi Range during the period. The Southern Range recorded 37 FIRs, while the Central, Northern and Western Ranges each reported 27 cases. The Eastern Range registered 11 FIRs. A senior police officer said that cases were lodged under Section 281 (rash driving) (up to six months' imprisonment and a fine of Rs 1,000 or both) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), along with relevant provisions of the Motor Vehicles Act. "Wrong-side, breaking



traffic rules and jumping lights while driving significantly increases the risk of head-on collisions, grievous injuries to motorists and pedestrians, and fatal road accidents. Whereas driving in the opposite direction puts not only the violator but also innocent road users at extreme risk. Head-on crashes at high speed leave little scope for survival," the police officer said. The officer emphasised that strict enforcement measures were being undertaken across the city at the

direction of senior officers of the Delhi Traffic Police. The officer said that surveillance through CCTV cameras, AI-based high-technology cameras and deployment of traffic personnel and intensified patrolling at major intersections, flyovers and other vulnerable stretches are part of the ongoing drive. "Everyone must drive in the proper lane and strictly follow the speed limit. High speed can prove fatal. While driving, people must keep their phones aside and must not indulge in making reels or scrolling social media. A few seconds of distraction can cost a life," the officer added.

## Three held for running drug trafficking network

ABHINAV KUMAR JHA  
New Delhi

The Delhi Police Crime Branch has arrested three people, including a husband and wife, for allegedly running an interstate heroin trafficking network from Uttar Pradesh to the national Capital. A total of 1,504 kilograms of heroin, valued at around 7.5 crore in the international market has been seized from them. The arrests were made by the Anti-Narcotics Task Force (ANTF) of the Crime Branch after a targeted operation

near the Bhopura border, which connects northeast Delhi with Ghaziabad in Uttar Pradesh. Police identified the main accused as Arif Khan, who worked as a taxi driver, his wife Shikha Ali, 30, and their associate, Jumman, 31, a resident of Bhalswa Dairy in Delhi. According to officials, the couple transported heroin from Bareilly in Uttar Pradesh and supplied it to contacts in Ghaziabad and different parts of Delhi. Deputy Commissioner of Police (Crime) Sanjeev Kumar Yadav said the ANTF



had received specific intelligence about Arif Khan's activities. He was suspected of bringing large quantities of heroin into Delhi over the past few months. Investigators found that Khan used his Maruti Wagon R taxi to move the contraband. To avoid suspicion, he

travelled with his wife so that they appeared to be an ordinary family on the move. Police said the couple usually crossed into Delhi late at night to escape routine checks. After tracking his routes and entry timings, the ANTF team laid a trap near the Bhopura border on February 10. The team used two vehicles to intercept the suspect's taxi. Khan was driving, and his wife was seated next to him. During the search of the vehicle, officers recovered 1.310 kilograms of heroin

from their possession. A case under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act was registered the same day, and both were taken into custody. During questioning, Khan revealed that he sourced the heroin from a supplier in Bareilly identified as Rahil. He then distributed the drug to recipients in Ghaziabad and Delhi. One of his key receivers was Jumman, who lived in the Bhalswa Dairy area. Police said Jumman had received a 500-gram consignment from Khan on February 7.

BSES Yamuna Power Limited, Delhi		Date: 20.02.2026	
NOTICE INVITING TENDER			
E-tenders are invited under the Two-Bid System (Un-priced & Priced Bid) for the following materials/works:			
Sl. No.	Material/Work Description	Estimated Cost (₹)	Due Date / Time (Submission/Opening)
1	Supply and Supervision for E/T/C of ONAF Cooled Power Transformers of Ratings 20/25 & 25/31.5MVA	31.50 Crore	16.03.2026 / 15:00 hrs (Submission) 16.03.2026 / 16:00 hrs (Opening)
2	Supply of Single Phase Natural Organic Ester Oil Filled Completely Self Protected (CSP) Transformer of Rating 25kVA 6.35/0.240kV	3.65 Crore	16.03.2026 / 15:00 hrs (Submission) 16.03.2026 / 16:00 hrs (Opening)
3	Rate Contract for Supply of Dry Type Distribution Transformers Of Ratings 400, 630, 1000, 2000 KVA 11/0.415kV	5.10 Crore	16.03.2026 / 15:00 hrs (Submission) 16.03.2026 / 16:00 hrs (Opening)
4	Rate Contract for Supply & Supervision of 11kV Indoor & Outdoor Ring Main Units	17.00 Crore	16.03.2026 / 15:00 hrs (Submission) 16.03.2026 / 16:00 hrs (Opening)
5	Rate Contract for Supply of Feeder Pillars of Various Types	1.75 Crore	16.03.2026 / 15:00 hrs (Submission) 16.03.2026 / 16:00 hrs (Opening)
6	Rate Contract for Supply of Air Circuit Breakers of Ratings 400, 1250, 2000 And 3200A With Enclosure	5.25 Crore	16.03.2026 / 15:00 hrs (Submission) 16.03.2026 / 16:00 hrs (Opening)
7	Rate Contract for Supply of Pole Mounting Single Phase & Three Phase Distribution Boxes With Accessories	8.30 Crore	16.03.2026 / 15:00 hrs (Submission) 16.03.2026 / 16:00 hrs (Opening)
8	Rate Contract for Supply of Insulated Piercing Connector (IPC) Of Various Sizes	1.30 Crore	16.03.2026 / 15:00 hrs (Submission) 16.03.2026 / 16:00 hrs (Opening)
9	Rate Contract for Supply of ONAN Cooled Distribution Transformers of Ratings 1000, 1600 & 2000 KVA 11/0.415kV	38.50 Crore	16.03.2026 / 15:00 hrs (Submission) 16.03.2026 / 16:00 hrs (Opening)
10	Rate Contract for Supply of 1.1kV 1C Aluminium Conductor XLPE Insulated Power Cables of Various Sizes	2.75 Crore	16.03.2026 / 15:00 hrs (Submission) 16.03.2026 / 16:00 hrs (Opening)
11	Rate Contract for Supply of 1.1kV 2C Aluminium Conductor XLPE Insulated Power Cables of Various Sizes	10.60 Crore	16.03.2026 / 15:00 hrs (Submission) 16.03.2026 / 16:00 hrs (Opening)
12	Rate Contract for Supply Of 1.1kV 4C Aluminium Conductor XLPE Insulated Power Cables of Various Sizes	64.00 Crore	16.03.2026 / 15:00 hrs (Submission) 16.03.2026 / 16:00 hrs (Opening)
13	Rate Contract for Supply of 1.1kV Aerial Bundled Aluminium Conductor XLPE Insulated Power Cables of Various Sizes	6.30 Crore	16.03.2026 / 15:00 hrs (Submission) 16.03.2026 / 16:00 hrs (Opening)
14	Rate Contract for Supply of 11kV 3C Aluminium Conductor XLPE Insulated Power Cables of Various Sizes	33.00 Crore	16.03.2026 / 15:00 hrs (Submission) 16.03.2026 / 16:00 hrs (Opening)
15	Rate Contract for Supply of 11kV XLPE Insulated Aluminium Conductor AB Cable of Sizes 3CX150+150 and 1CX95+95 MM <sup>2</sup>	4.30 Crore	16.03.2026 / 15:00 hrs (Submission) 16.03.2026 / 16:00 hrs (Opening)

## Tarique Rahman's tenure opens diplomatic reset between Delhi, Dhaka

ASHOKE RAJ ■ New Delhi

In a strong signal of diplomatic recalibration after months of strain, India has begun steps to fully restore visa services in Bangladesh, with senior officials indicating that normal operations could resume in the near future. The move follows the political transition in Dhaka and comes shortly after Tarique Rahman assumed office as prime minister, ushering in what both sides describe as a renewed phase in bilateral engagement.

The Indian mission in Bangladesh has confirmed that work is under way to reinstate all categories of visas that were curtailed during the recent period of unrest and diplomatic

unease. India's senior consular official in Sylhet, Aniruddha Das, said that while medical and double-entry visas are currently being processed, additional categories — including regular travel visas — are expected to resume in phases.

"Medical and double-entry visas are being issued now, and steps are under way to resume other categories, including travel visas," he said at the Sylhet District Press Club, underscoring New Delhi's intention to ease cross-border mobility.

The latest development comes after the departure of Muhammad Yunus from the centre of power in Dhaka. Diplomatic ties between India and Bangladesh had



Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla with newly sworn-in Bangladesh Prime Minister Tarique Rahman during a meeting, in Dhaka, Bangladesh. PTI

experienced visible friction during the interim administration, particularly after India extended refuge to former prime minister Sheikh Hasina following her exit from Bangladesh in August 2024.

Following a sweeping electoral victory by the Bangladesh Nationalist Party, Rahman secured a two-thirds majority in parliament and extended an invitation to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to attend his swearing-in ceremony. Modi congratulated Rahman on his party's win and invited him to visit India after formally assuming office — moves seen as efforts to stabilise and rebuild trust between the two neighbours.

## Rush hour software glitch disrupts air traffic

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

Airports across India on Thursday morning faced disruptions after a software outage. According to sources, IndiGo, Air India Express, Spicejet and Akasa Air were impacted at Delhi, Mumbai and other airports. The impact was also felt in parts of the Asia-Pacific and Europe.

The disruption was caused by Navitaire, a software used for reservations and departure control systems used by several commercial carriers. Following the glitch airlines faced issues in checking in passengers.

At Indira Gandhi International Airport, many travelers were caught off guard during peak hours. The outage led to an increase in wait times as staff worked to manage the flow of passengers manually. It coincided with the arrival of several high-profile delegates attending the ongoing AI Summit in the national capital.

"Several VIP movements put additional operational pressure on terminals dealing with early morning traffic.

A NOTAM, issued because of the VIP movements, also added to the congestion," officials briefed on the situation said.

## Punjab Govt boosts trade security measures

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Chandigarh

The Punjab Government has strengthened coordination between the police and traders' bodies to ensure a safe business environment in the state, Finance Minister Harpal Singh Cheema said on Thursday.

Chairing a high-level meeting, Cheema said the safety of traders is non-negotiable and remains a key part of Punjab's ease of doing business framework. Director General of Police (DGP) Gaurav Yadav and Excise and Taxation Commissioner Jitenderjwal were present in the meeting. Cheema directed district



police chiefs to maintain continuous contact with the Punjab State Traders Commission (PSTC) and traders' committees at the district and constituency levels. He asked police officials to ensure regular participation in meetings of these bodies so that issues can be resolved on the spot.

## IN FOCUS



Sarang display team performs manoeuvres over the Jal Mahal during a rehearsal in Jaipur, Rajasthan. PTI

## Galgotias row reaches UP Assembly

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Lucknow

The controversy surrounding Galgotias University displaying a made-in-China robotic dog as its own innovation at the AI Impact Summit in Delhi echoed in the Uttar Pradesh Assembly on Thursday, with Samajwadi Party members demanding a thorough probe into the matter, alleging that the incident put the future of the students in jeopardy.

Raising the issue during Zero Hour, Samajwadi Party (SP) MLAs Sachin Yadav and Pankaj Malik alleged that the private university, located in Greater Noida, brought disrepute to both the state and the country.

The row erupted after a university representative



showcased a robotic dog named Orion on Tuesday, claiming that it was developed by the centre of excellence at Galgotias, prompting netizens to quickly point out that it was a Uniree Go2, manufactured by China's Uniree Robotics and commonly used in research and education worldwide. The private university made a dogged attempt to brazen it out with bizarre justifications through Wednesday before issuing an apology in the evening after the organisers cut power supply to its stall at the event and asked the occupants to leave.

Earlier, SP members attempted to raise the matter under Rule 56, but Speaker Satish Mahana disallowed it, noting that neither was the AI Impact Summit held in Uttar Pradesh nor was it organised

by the state government, making it ineligible for discussion in the Assembly.

Rule 56 refers to a procedural provision under the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly that allows a member to raise a matter of urgent public importance with the permission of the speaker.

Deputy Speaker Manju Sivach later allowed the SP members to speak on the issue under a calling attention motion. Referring to the controversy, Yadav said the university showcased a China-manufactured robotic dog as its own product, thereby making a mockery of Uttar Pradesh and the country at the global level.

## CIPL, Bihar sign MoU for AI centre in Patna

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Patna

Corporate Infotech Private limited (CIPL) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Government of Bihar to establish a Core Development Centre and an Artificial Intelligence (AI) Centre of Excellence in Patna.

The MoU was signed during the India AI Summit in the presence of senior state leaders, including Samrat Choudhary, Deputy Chief Minister of Bihar, and Shreyasi Singh, Minister for

Information Technology.

Under the agreement, CIPL will initially invest ₹30 crore in the project, with plans to increase the total investment to 100 crore in the coming years.

The centre will focus on advanced technologies such as AI, SAP, cloud computing, cybersecurity, data centre operations, and enterprise digital platforms. The project is expected to create more than 500 direct jobs in its first year, with plans to expand to over 2,000 IT professionals within five years.

## DMDK joins DMK-led alliance ahead of TN polls

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Chennai

Late actor Vijayakanth founded DMDK on Thursday joined the DMK-led Secular Progressive Alliance, ahead of the Tamil Nadu Assembly elections and ending weeks of political speculations.

The pact was sealed at DMK headquarters Anna Arivalayam in the presence of Chief Minister and party president M K Stalin.

DMDK General Secretary Premathala Vijayakanth, accompanied by senior party functionaries, including treasurer L K Sudheesh, called on Stalin to formalise the partnership. In a social



media post, Stalin said, "It brings me immense joy that the DMDK, founded by Captain Vijayakanth and a man who had unwavering love for Kalaignar (DMK patriarch M Karunanidhi), has

joined the secular progressive alliance."

The DMDK founder is fondly addressed as 'Captain.' "I warmly welcome sister Premalatha Vijayakanth, who is now skillfully leading the

party founded by Captain, along with their party supporters.

Let this bond of goodwill continue to contribute to the progress and prosperity of Tamil Nadu," he said, sharing images of the DMDK leaders joining the DMK-led alliance. He emphasised the objective of ensuring the continuation of the 'Dravidian model' of governance.

Later, addressing reporters at the DMDK party office, Premalatha said, "With the blessings of both the Captain (Vijayakanth) and Kalaignar, we have forged an alliance with the DMK. "A seat-sharing committee will be formed soon," she added.

## ECI asks 22 states, UTs to prepare SIR

RAJESH KUMAR ■ New Delhi

With nearly seven crore voters already deleted in the Special Intensive Revision (SIR), the Election Commission of India (ECI) has now asked 22 states and union territories, including Delhi to complete preparatory work related to the exercise as it is "expected to start from April".

Once the exercise is completed, all states and UTs will be covered. In Bihar, the SIR exercise was completed and is ongoing in nine states and three UTs. In Assam, a 'special revision', instead of SIR, was completed on February 10.

EC's Secretary Pawan Dewan has written to the Chief Electoral Officers (CEOs) of these states and UTs, directing them to complete all necessary preparations for the revision exercise at the earliest. In a letter to the CEOs of Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Chandigarh, Dadra and Nagar Haveli & Daman and Diu, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Ladakh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Delhi, Odisha, Punjab, Sikkim, Tripura, Telangana and Uttarakhand, the EC said pan-India SIR of voters' list was



ordered in June last year. The CEOs have been asked to "complete preparatory work" related to SIR "at the earliest", EC Secretary Pawan Dewan said in his letter.

The letter recalled that the EC had on June 24 last year ordered that SIR will be undertaken across the country and directed all CEOs, except Bihar where the exercise started in June 2025 itself, to initiate pre-revision activities for the exercise.

The exercise in these states will coincide with the first phase of Census 2027, which is the Housing and Housing Census that will be undertaken between April and September. EC officials said they were confident that both exercises will not clash.

According to EC's sources, nearly seven crore voters were removed from the draft electoral rolls of nine states and three Union territories. EC officials said the names of those removed from the draft rolls have been put in the 'ASD' or absent, shifted and dead/duplicate category.

## 9 patients eyes removed, 9 others lose vision after cataract surgery in Gorakhpur; hospital sealed

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Gorakhpur

As many as nine patients had to get an eye removed, and nine others lost vision in one of the eyes after they developed an infection following cataract surgeries at a private hospital here, prompting authorities to seal the facility and order an inquiry. Official sources said on Thursday that the surgeries were conducted on 30 patients during an eye camp held at New Rajesh HiTech Hospital on February 1.

They said that within 24 hours of the surgeries, several patients began com-



plainting of severe pain and discharge from the operated eye. At least 18 developed infections and were referred to hospitals in Delhi, Lucknow and Varanasi as their condition worsened, with one patient, however, partially regaining vision

later, officials confirmed.

District Magistrate Deepak Meena said the hospital has been sealed and a magisterial inquiry has been ordered.

"If anyone is found guilty, their registration will be cancelled," he said. Chief Medical Officer Dr Rajesh Jha termed it a "serious lapse" and said further action would follow the inquiry report.

A health department culture test has confirmed bacterial infection.

Many of the surgeries were conducted under the Ayushman Bharat scheme. Patients alleged that they

were discharged just hours after surgery and developed complications the next day.

Some of the worst-affected patients are undergoing treatment at AIIMS Delhi and hospitals in Varanasi and Lucknow. In several cases, doctors had to remove the infected eye to prevent the infection from spreading further, officials said. One of the affected patients, Paradeshi, said doctors at AIIMS Delhi on February 17 told him that he had lost vision in the operated eye. "They said the eye may have to be removed depending on reports," he said.

## Combat preparedness assessed in Ladakh

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Leh/Jammu

Northern Army Commander Lieutenant General Pratik Sharma on Thursday visited the Siachen sector and reviewed the combat potential and operational preparedness of troops.

The Army commander lauded the professionalism, courage and dedication of the soldiers deployed at one of the world's highest and coldest military zones and urged all ranks to embrace technology to effectively meet the challenges of modern warfare. "Lt Gen Pratik Sharma, Army Commander Northern

Command, visited Siachen Brigade to review combat potential and operational preparedness," the Northern Command Headquarters said in a post on X.

Sharma also visited the Siachen Ski Node, where he evaluated the training infrastructure and skiing capabilities, and interacted with troops operating in the extremely harsh climate and terrain.

Commending their high morale and steadfast commitment, he reiterated the importance of technological adaptation in maintaining operational superiority in the Siachen glacier.

## SC flags fiscal stress of populist schemes

Making it clear that it was not singling out Tamil Nadu, the bench said most of the States are revenue deficit states and yet they indulge in populist schemes like giving free ration, free cycles and asked was it not destroying the work culture? "We are not talking of Tamil Nadu in particular. We are talking of pan-India... It is understandable that, as a welfare State, you want to provide relief to the marginalised. But without drawing any distinction between those who can afford and those who cannot afford, if you start giving, will it not amount to a sort of appeasing policy?" the CJJ asked.

## British prince arrested in UK over misconduct

Andrew was arrested from the King's Sandringham Estate in Norfolk, where he was residing after moving out of the Royal Lodge on the British monarch's Windsor Castle estate. Thames Valley Police said they are carrying out searches

at addresses associated with the former prince in Berkshire and Norfolk, while he remains in police custody. While the force said they would not be naming the arrested man, it was soon established that the arrested suspect was Andrew, who turned 66 on Thursday.

As Duke of York, Andrew had served as the UK's trade envoy between 2001 and 2011, travelling globally and having privileged access to senior government and business contacts around the world.

According to the Epstein emails release, Andrew was accused of forwarding government reports from official visits to the American sex offender and financier, who died in a New York prison in August 2019. "Following a thorough assessment, we have now opened an investigation into this allegation of misconduct in public office," said Oliver Wright, Assistant Chief Constable of Thames Valley Police.

"It is important that we protect the integrity and objectivity of our investigation as we work with our partners to investigate this alleged offence. "We understand the significant public interest in this case, and we will provide updates at the appropriate time," he said.

In UK law, an arrest requires police to have rea-

## FROM PAGE - 1

sonable grounds to suspect an offence has taken place and reasonable grounds for believing that it is necessary to arrest the person in question.

Earlier, when asked about the allegations against Andrew during his time as a former trade envoy in the then government's Department of Business over a decade ago, British Prime Minister Keir Starmer told the BBC that no individual is above the law.

"Anybody who has any information should testify. So, whether it's Andrew or anybody else, anybody who has got relevant information should come forward to whatever the relevant body is, in this particular case, we're talking about Epstein, but there are plenty of other cases," said Starmer. "Anybody who has got information relating to any aspect of violence against women and girls has, in my view, a duty to come forward, whoever they are.

"One of the core principles in our system is that everybody is equal under the law, and nobody is above the law, and it is really important that is applied across the board.

"That is the principle. It's a long-standing principle, it's a very important principle of our country, our society, and it applies, and it has to

apply in this case, in the same way as it would apply in any other case," he said.

## Bill Gates cancels AI summit keynote

Gates continues to face questions over his relationship with the deceased child sex offender Jeffrey Epstein. Government sources on February 17 stated that an invitation extended to Gates for the Summit had been withdrawn, and he will not be participating in the summit, which started on February 16. The same day, his name went missing from the key participants' list. Bill Gates cancels AI summit keynote

Government sources had previously stated that Gates will not attend the Summit as his name figures in the files relating to the late sex offender Jeffrey Epstein, and may create some discomfort. Meanwhile, Alphabet and Google CEO Sundar Pichai, Meta's Chief AI Officer Alexandr Wang, Sarvam co-founder Pratyush Kumar, and Google DeepMind CEO Demis Hassabis, among other tech leaders, attended the summit.

Gates arrived in India on Monday. His first stop

during the visit was Vijayawada, where he met Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, Deputy Chief Minister K Pawan Kalyan, and senior state government officials. Ministers Nara Lokesh, Vangalapati Anitha, K Archannaidu, and Y Satya Kumar welcomed Gates at the Vijayawada international airport on Monday.

## MANAV vision to anchor India's AI push: PM Modi

He underlined the growing need for watermarking and clear source standards as AI increasingly generates text, images, and videos, stressing that trust must be built into technology from the start. Emphasising the importance of child safety, the Prime Minister stated that just as school syllabi are curated, the AI space must also be child-safe and family-guided. He remarked that today there are two kinds of people—those who see fear in AI and those who see fortune.

Prime Minister Modi remarked that India's vision for AI is clearly reflected in the theme of the summit—*Sarvajan Hitaya, Sarvajan Sukhaya*—Welfare and happiness for all.



## PM Modi's speech dubbed in 11 languages in AI Summit



India's strides in artificial intelligence were showcased during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's speech at the AI Impact Summit on Thursday, which was dubbed live in 11 languages, along with an AI-enabled sign language interpretation.

## BJP MLA Bishnu Prasad Sharma joins TMC

Rebel BJP MLA Bishnu Prasad Sharma joined the ruling TMC in West Bengal on Thursday ahead of the assembly elections. Sharma, a first-time MLA from Kurseong, joined the party at its headquarters in Kolkata, signalling a churn in the Darjeeling Hills before the assembly polls, expected to be held in the next two months. He was welcomed to the TMC by Education Minister Bratya Basu and Industry Minister Shashi Panja.



## Rajasthan will open 841 new fair price shops: Food Minister



Rajasthan's Food and Civil Supplies Minister Sumit Godara informed the House on Thursday that the state Government has issued notifications for the opening of 841 new fair price shops. Of these, 442 shops have completed the selection process, while the process for the remaining 399 shops is ongoing, Godara said.

## Union minister Savitri Thakur meets EU delegation

Union Minister Savitri Thakur on Thursday met a European Union delegation and discussed women's rights, gender equality, child protection and inclusive development. The minister also shared India's ongoing efforts to strengthen safety, nutrition, education, and empowerment of women and children. "Such engagements deepen mutual understanding and open new avenues of cooperation," she added.



# Global experts deliberate future of AI scaling at summit

ABHINAV KUMAR JHA  
New Delhi

There is going to be no slowdown. "And if safety is not built in from the start, we are heading for a trust crisis." These powerful remarks defined the tone of a high-level discussion on Artificial Intelligence (AI) at the AI Knowledge Consortium event titled "Diffusing AI: Human Capital, Infrastructure, and Trust", held on Thursday at India International Centre in the national Capital.

The event brought together global technology and regulatory leaders to debate how AI should scale in countries like India.

Palo Alto Networks CEO Nimesh Arora made it clear that the AI wave cannot be paused. "Anyone who tries to slow it down will just

give up competitive advantage," he said. He pointed to the billions of dollars being invested globally in building massive data centres and faster AI models. According to him, this is the fastest technology curve the world has seen.

Arora used a personal story to explain society's position in the AI era. Growing up in India, playing cricket, and later moving to the US, he said he never became a "native" to American sports.

"None of us are natives to AI. We are all immigrants," he said. He warned against overconfidence in judging or controlling a technology that is still evolving.

Leading national daily The Pioneer, published from eight cities including New Delhi, was the media partner of the event organised in part-

nership with EDGE. The Pioneer group chairman Prashant Tewari and Printer Publisher Kushan Mitra were present on the occasion along with top functionaries of the EDGE.

He also addressed fears about job losses. "We don't have a job problem," Arora said. He argued that AI will create demand for five times more developers and skilled professionals. From robotics to automation, he said, every sector will require programming and AI training.

"Heavy industry jobs will also become developer jobs," he added. While short-term disruption may happen, he said, history shows workers adapt over time.

Arora made a bold prediction about the future of applications. He said most of today's apps may disappear



The Pioneer was the media partner of the AI Knowledge Consortium, which hosted a panel discussion on Diffusing AI: Human Capital, Infrastructure, and Trust on the sidelines of the Impact AI Summit in New Delhi. The panel moderated by Vivan Sharan, partner, Koan Advisory, included Nimesh Arora of Palo Alto Networks and Melanie Dawes, Chief Executive Officer of the UK's Telecom and Broadcasting regulator, Ofcom. Several major issues were discussed around how AI is growing and how it will generate jobs, the challenges around content moderation and regulation and the race to the top in Artificial Intelligence.

in the next five to ten years. Instead of clicking through multiple platforms, users will speak directly to AI agents. Booking flights, reserving hotels, and arranging transport could happen through a single natural language command. "The user interface will change completely," he said.

Melanie Dawes, Chief Executive of Ofcom, the UK's communications regulator, agreed that AI cannot be slowed. But she warned that speed without responsibility could damage public trust. "If companies launch first and think about safety later, we are heading into difficult territory," she said.

Dawes said people already have concerns about how social media platforms handled safety over the past two decades.

She stressed that AI companies must conduct proper risk assessments before launching new tools, especially those used by children.

"The risks created by technology are often best solved by technology," she said, adding that regulators must work collaboratively with companies.

She highlighted Ofcom's work in online safety enforcement, including investigations into new AI features and the introduction of age assurance systems for adult content platforms in the UK.

According to her, effective regulation is not about stopping innovation but about enabling it responsibly.

Both speakers acknowledged that AI is unfolding in a highly competitive global

environment.

Dawes described Silicon Valley as being in a "gold rush" moment. But she also said national regulators can no longer fully control digital markets, as services now operate globally.

The discussion repeatedly returned to one theme: balance. AI offers a massive opportunity for countries like India. It can transform services, boost productivity, and create new industries. But without trust, safety, and skilled human capital, the gains may not last.

The message in the presence of an eminent audience was clear. The AI race is accelerating. The real challenge is not whether it will reshape the world. It is whether Governments, companies, and citizens can shape it wisely.

## DRDO conducts parachute test for Gaganyaan

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
New Delhi

India's human spaceflight programme has achieved a key milestone with the successful qualification level load test of the Drogue Parachute for the Gaganyaan programme, the Defence Ministry said on Thursday.

Giving details, officials said the test was conducted on Wednesday at the Rail Track Rocket Sled (RTRS) facility of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) at Terminal Ballistics Research Laboratory (TBRL), Chandigarh.



The RTRS is a specialised dynamic test facility being used extensively for high-speed aerodynamic and ballistic evaluations.

The test was conducted with Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre, ISRO, Aerial Delivery

Research and Development Establishment, DRDO, alongside various TBRL's dedicated teams. The test proves India's expertise in designing and manufacturing high-strength ribbon parachutes.

The achievement once again highlights TBRL's immense contributions by providing advanced test facilities, instrumentation and technical expertise for space and defence programmes. Defence Minister

Rajnath Singh complimented DRDO, ISRO and industry on the successful qualification test for Gaganyaan Drogue Parachute. The test is another big step in furthering the vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat, he said.

## Late ADDC residence dedicated as library in Jammu

MOHIT KANDHARI  
Jammu

Paying a befitting tribute to a diligent public servant who sacrificed his life in the line of duty in the immediate aftermath of 'Operation Sindoor' last year, the District Administration of Rajouri has transformed the official residence of the late Additional District Development Commissioner (ADDC), Dr Raj Kumar Thappa, into a public memorial and library for posterity.

A senior officer of the District Administration in Rajouri told The Pioneer that the official residence of ADDC Raj Kumar Thappa has been converted into a public memorial and library for students. We have displayed the hard work done by the ADDC Raj Kumar Thappa in the form of a picture gallery inside his residence.

Raj Kumar Thappa, an MBBS



graduate who joined the Jammu and Kashmir Administrative Service (JKAS) in 2001, was serving as ADDC Rajouri when he succumbed to injuries during heavy shelling on May 10, 2025.

Before he became a victim of cross-border shelling by Pakistan, ADDC Thappa remained on his toes, finalising arrangements for the safety of residents along the Line of Control in Rajouri,

head and back.

Deputy Commissioner, Rajouri, Abhishek Sharma, while paying tributes last year, remembered Raj Kumar Thappa as an able Civil servant. He laid down his life in the line of duty during unprovoked shelling by Pakistan. His valour will be remembered with honour. His contribution to the Badhaal crisis was unparalleled. People from different walks of life also remembered him as a workaholic and an efficient civil servant, Sharma had said, remembering his contributions for the welfare of the common masses.

The converted residence will serve as a memorial space to commemorate his legacy while functioning as a public library to benefit the community, particularly youth and students in the border district.

## VP hails PM speech at AI summit

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's address at the India AI Impact Summit here reflects the country's visionary and responsible approach to Artificial Intelligence, Vice-President CP Radhakrishnan said on Thursday. Modi's articulation of the MANAV vision places humanity at the centre of technological advancement, Vice-President said.



In a social media post, the V-P said India's strides in AI, driven by innovation, inclusivity and ethical governance are positioning the nation as a global leader in shaping the future of this transformative technology.

Prime Minister Modi pitched for democratising artificial intelligence and making it a tool for inclusion and empowerment, saying humans must not become mere data points or reduced to raw material.

India, he said, believes that artificial intelligence will truly serve the good of the world when it is shared and its codes are open, asserting that the country does not fear AI but sees in it a fortune and a blueprint of tomorrow.

Radhakrishnan said the emphasis on accessibility, accountability and global cooperation ensures that AI becomes a force for collective progress and welfare.

"I am confident that under this forward-looking vision, artificial intelligence will serve as a tool for empowerment, innovation and sustainable development, benefiting not only India but the entire world," he said.

## IAI announces 25th edition of GCA

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
Mumbai

The Institute of Actuaries of India (IAI) on Thursday announced the 25th edition of the Global Conference of Actuaries (GCA), marking the Silver Jubilee of India's most influential platform for risk, insurance and financial sustainability conversations.

The conference will be held in Mumbai from February 22-24, 2026 at Jio World Convention Centre.

Set against India's ambition of becoming a Viksit Bharat by 2047, this year's theme "Actuarial Pathways to Viksit Bharat: Managing Risks for Inclusive Social and Economic Growth",



positions actuaries at the heart of the country's long-term and sustainable growth story.

From expanding insurance and pension coverage to managing climate-linked risks and strengthening financial resilience, the conference will focus on how data-driven risk thinking can support India's next phase of development.

Speaking at the Press

Conference, Preeti Chandrashekhar, President, Institute of Actuaries of India, said, "To achieve the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047, it is imperative to manage financial, demographic, climate and systemic risk in a holistic manner. The 25th edition of GCA is an opportunity to place actuarial thinking at the centre of conversations around inclusive growth and long-term resilience. As the profession marks this milestone year, we are focused on how actuaries can contribute meaningfully to India's growth story."

IAI is the leading professional body for actuaries in India, established under the Actuaries Act, 2006.

## Amit Shah to launch VVP phase 2 for border villages

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
New Delhi

To ensure vigilant citizenry in border areas, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday will launch the second phase of the Vibrant Villages Programme (VVP), covering 1,954 border villages in 15 states and 2 UTs, officials said.

Designed to ensure comprehensive and sustainable development of border villages, the second phase of the VVP will be a centrally-funded scheme with an outlay of

₹6,839 crore up to financial year 2028-29, a Government statement issued on Thursday said.

The Union minister will launch the programme from Nathanpur in Cachar, Assam. "It focuses on improving essential infrastructure, enhancing access to basic services, and creating sustainable livelihood opportunities, thereby fostering secure, resilient and prosperous border communities in alignment with the vision of Viksit Bharat @2047," it said.

On April 2, 2025, the



₹6,839 crore up to financial year 2028-29, a Government statement issued on Thursday said.

The Union minister will launch the programme from Nathanpur in Cachar, Assam. "It focuses on improving essential infrastructure, enhancing access to basic services, and creating sustainable livelihood opportunities, thereby fostering secure, resilient and prosperous border communities in alignment with the vision of Viksit Bharat @2047," it said.

The VVP programme was sanctioned by the central Government on February 15, 2023, covering 662 select vil-

lages in 46 blocks abutting the northern border in 19 districts in the states of Arunachal Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Uttarakhand and Ladakh.

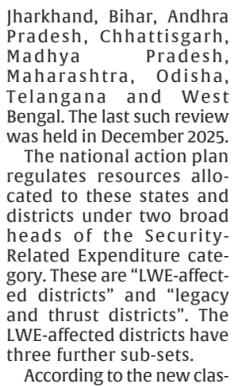
Under the VVP-I, 2,558 projects/works with an outlay of ₹3,431 crore have been sanctioned by the MHA, and over 8,500 activities, including awareness drives, health and veterinary camps, fairs and festivals and promotion of tourism, have been undertaken.

Government gave nod to the second phase, identifying 1,954 villages abutting international land borders of 15 states and 2 UTs for comprehensive development, Minister of State for Home Affairs Nityanand Rai had said in a written response in Lok Sabha on February 3.

## Naxal-hit districts down to seven: Government review

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
New Delhi

A fresh review of the regions affected by Left Wing Extremism (LWE) has brought down the number of affected districts in the country to seven from eight, a development that aligns with the Union Government's declaration on ending the Naxal menace by March 2026. The Ministry of Home Affairs has recently issued the new categorisation to all Naxal-affected states with effect from February 9, officials said.



A comprehensive review of the "National Policy and Action Plan to Address LWE" was undertaken recently by the Union Government, analysing 38 districts across nine states, including

Jharkhand, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Telangana and West Bengal. The last such review was held in December 2025.



The national action plan regulates resources allocated to these states and districts under two broad heads of the Security-Related Expenditure category. These are "LWE-affected districts" and "legacy and thrust districts". The LWE-affected districts have three further sub-sets.

According to the new classification, the "LWE-affected districts", where Naxal violence and activities are still being reported, have been reduced to seven from eight recognised in the December 2025 review. These seven

districts are Bijapur, Narayanpur, Sukma, Kanker and Dantewada in Chhattisgarh; West Singhbhum in Jharkhand, and Kandhamal in Odisha.

There are three sub-categories to LWE-affected districts: "most affected districts", "districts of concern" and "other LWE-affected districts". The "most affect-

ed districts" continue to remain the same from the last review — Bijapur, Narayanpur and Sukma in Chhattisgarh.

There are two "districts of concern" where Naxalism is waning, but focused deployment of resources is still required. These are Kanker in Chhattisgarh and West Singhbhum in Jharkhand.

The "other LWE-affected districts" category has seen a reduction of one district from December 2025. At present, there are two districts in the category: Dantewada in Chhattisgarh and Kandhamal in Odisha.

Under the "legacy and thrust districts" category, there are 31 districts across nine States now, as compared to 30 in December

2025. According to the home ministry's definition, "legacy districts" are those that are no longer LWE-affected but need support in terms of security and development works for some time.

The "thrust districts" are those that are prospective sites of Naxal expansion and therefore require continued support. Union Home Minister Amit Shah has repeatedly asserted that the Naxal menace, once called the biggest internal security challenge for India in 2010, will see an end by March this year.



## States Focus

## PM committed to dignified return of Kashmiri Pandits: J&K LG



### BIHAR DECLARE NAXAL-FREE AFTER KODA SURRENDER

The Bihar Police claimed that the State has become 'Naxal-free' with the surrender of a top Maoist, Suresh Koda alias Mustakim, who carried a bounty of ₹3 lakh on his head. According to a statement issued by the Police Headquarters, Koda, who was named in at least 60 cases, many of which were lodged under the stringent UAPA, surrendered before the Special Task Force (STF) in Munger district on Wednesday. Koda gave himself up along with three assault rifles, hundreds of ammunition and magazines, besides some cash.



### IAF AIR SHOW OVER JAL MAHAL ON FEBRUARY 20 & 22

The skies over Jaipur's iconic Jal Mahal will come alive with breathtaking aerial display as the Indian Air Force's renowned Surya Kiran Aerobatic Team and Sarang Helicopter Display Team will perform spectacular air shows on February 20 and 22. The events, organised in collaboration with the Rajasthan government, will showcase precision manoeuvres, close-formation flying and vibrant smoke trails forming the national tricolour, inspiring patriotism and showcasing IAF's operational excellence.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Jammu

Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor (LG) Manoj Sinha on Thursday said that the return of the Kashmiri Pandit community to the valley, with full dignity and security, is a commitment made by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The LG emphasised that the terror ecosystem in J&K tried to bury the truth, but the terrorists and their support networks who sowed terror and struck at the souls of generations will never be forgiven or forgotten.

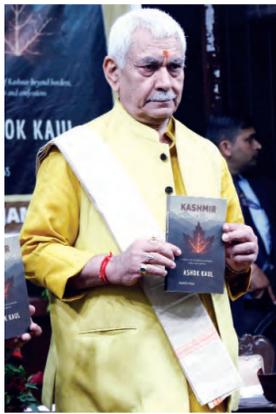
"The return of Kashmiri Pandits with full dignity and security is the commitment of Prime Minister Narendra Modi", Sinha said while addressing the release of a book titled 'Kashmir-Nativity Regained', authored by Prof Ashok Kaul.

He noted that Jammu and

Kashmir has undergone a significant transformation since 2019. "The adversary's sinister plot to destroy the dreams and destiny of people of the UT has been decisively dismantled. Through tireless effort, this land's ancient glory has been restored, and development has been accelerated. Very soon, this soil will be completely freed from the scourge of terrorism."

The book 'Kashmir-nativity regained' explores the Kashmiri Pandit exodus and captures the terror of dark days and the lasting devastation of being wrenched from ancestral roots.

"I salute the indomitable spirit of the Kashmiri Pandit community. Every displaced family carried within it a living ember of Kashmir. In the crucible of struggle and adversity, they preserved philoso-



J and K Lt. Governor Manoj Sinha during the 'Kashmir Nativity Regained' book release event in Jammu on Thursday

phy, spirituality, culture, language, and traditions. Even in agony, they unearthed possibilities and scaled new pinnacles of success," the lieutenant governor said.

Sinha highlighted the launch of the Kashmiri migrant web portal in 2021, which aims to recover houses and lands of the Kashmiri Pandit community that have been encroached upon.

"I firmly believe that among the world's gravest sorrows is the agony of becoming a stranger on one's own soil. This is precisely what had transpired in Jammu and Kashmir," he said. The Lieutenant Governor added that the pain stemming from the massacre of Kashmiri Pandits by terrorists in 1989-90 is so profound that even time has not dulled it.

"The torment of abandoning homes overnight, of being uproot-

ed from one's roots, lingers like thorns in the veins of displaced families even today," he said.

Calling on the youth to never forget the atrocities committed by terrorists, Sinha said, "The younger generation must never forget that Pakistan-backed terrorists have also spilled the blood of thousands of innocent Kashmiri Muslims. Many cases are so heartrending that words falter in their retelling. Justice has begun flowing to those families since last year, with efforts underway to fulfil their employment needs alongside other essentials."

The LG said that in August 2019, when Prime Minister Modi abolished Article 370 in August 2019, it instilled hope that the younger generation of the Kashmiri Pandit community could reclaim their roots without fear.

## Infiltration bid foiled in Sunderbani area of Rajouri district

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ Jammu

Alert troops of the Indian Army's White Knight Corps successfully thwarted an infiltration bid by terrorists along the Line of Control (LoC) in the early hours of Thursday.

According to a statement issued by the Nagrota-based White Knight Corps, based on intelligence inputs and sustained surveillance, the troops detected suspicious movement of terrorists in the general area of Nathua Tibba, Sunderbani sector, in Rajouri district.

"Alert troops responded promptly with calibrated and targeted fire, foiling the infiltration attempt. No casualties were reported on



the Indian side, and the intruders were forced to retreat without crossing the border".

To prevent any fresh infiltration bid, the ground troops have been repositioned and re-oriented to strengthen control over the

area. In a post on X, the White Knight Corps said, "Integrated ground patrols and aerial surveillance have been intensified to maintain comprehensive domination. A high State of operational alert continues across the sector to prevent any

further attempts". Meanwhile, a separate terror module was also busted by the joint team of security forces with the arrest of an individual, Sachin alias Pamma, a resident of Nowshera.

During the operation, security forces recovered 01 x TISAS Zigana 9mm (Turkey-made) pistol, 01 x TT-30 (Norinco, China-made) pistol, 02 x extended 50-round Zigana magazines, 02 x standard pistol magazines and 15 x 9mm live rounds.

Preliminary investigation indicates the individual was in direct contact with Pakistan-based terrorists/smugglers and was operating a trans-border, inter-State weapons racket.

## Veteran journalist and author K Govindan Kutty passes away

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Thiruvananthapuram

Veteran journalist and author K Govindan Kutty has died after a brief illness here, family sources said on Thursday. Govindan Kutty (81) is survived by wife, son and daughter.

He breathed his last at his residence here on February 18. Kutty, known as KGK in the journalists' circle, had a deep knowledge of politics in Kerala and at the national level and had a notable career as a reporter and editor in Thiruvananthapuram and New Delhi.

He was the journalist who broke the news of the air crash involving the then Prime Minister Morarji Desai in 1977 at Jorhat in Assam. Desai had survived the crash.

Kutty was one of the journalists who first reported the news of internal fissures in the monolithic structure of the CPI(M) in Kerala in the 1980s, which later led to the expulsion of its firebrand



leader MV Raghavan in 1986 and a split in the party.

His journalistic writing at the peak of his career was a model to young journalists of the period. His fluent, yet sharp prose had attracted and moulded many aspiring young scribes.

Kutty, who had a long and distinguished career with Indian Express and India Today, had also authored ten books in English and Malayalam. He was consulting editor of Pioneer's Kerala edition in 2005.

## 2-day minority affairs meet begins in Bihar

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Patna

A two-day brainstorming session of the Union Minority Affairs ministry was inaugurated in Bihar on Thursday to bring together officials

at the Centre and in States with a view to holding deliberations on various issues. Union Minority Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju launched the *Chintan Shivir*, where officials will discuss "a policy-driven roadmap for minority welfare and socio-economic development", according to an official Statement. On the occasion, Rijiju launched facilities like "Haj wrist bands" and "Haj Suvidha App", meant for Muslims going on a pilgrimage to Mecca, and AI chatbots of the department.

at the Centre and in States with a view to holding deliberations on various issues. Union Minority Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju launched the *Chintan Shivir*, where officials will discuss "a policy-driven roadmap for minority welfare and socio-economic development", according to an official Statement. On the occasion, Rijiju launched facilities like "Haj wrist bands" and "Haj Suvidha App", meant for Muslims going on a pilgrimage to Mecca, and AI chatbots of the department.

**GOVERNMENT OF HARYANA TENDER NOTICE**

SR. NO.	NAME OF BOARD/CORP./AUTH.	NAME OF WORK/NOTICE TENDER	OPENING DATE (TIME)	AMOUNT / EMD (APPROX.) INRUPEES	WEBSITE OF THE BOARD/CORP./AUTH.	MOBIL OFFICE/CONTACT DETAILS/EMAIL
1	HSIDC	BALANCE WORK OF LABOUR HOUSING IN PHASE-VI, SECTOR-33 AT I.E. KUNDLI	22.02.2026 16:00:00	Rs. 2360.34 LACS	https://tenders.hry.nic.in	0122-2567402 @kundi@hsidc.org.in

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION KINDLY VISIT : [www.haryanaeprocurement.gov.in](http://www.haryanaeprocurement.gov.in) or [www.etenders.hry.nic.in](http://www.etenders.hry.nic.in) RO 43163-1-27-7

Office of the Superintending Engineer  
3rd Circle, Public Works Department, Pithoragarh  
Fax No: 05964-228309 Email : [sepwdpth@rediffmail.com](mailto:sepwdpth@rediffmail.com)  
Letter No. : 697/208C/2025 Dated : 19/02/2026

**National Competitive E-Tender Notice**

The Superintending Engineer 3rd Circle, Public Works Department, Pithoragarh invites tender through E-Tendering (Two Bid System) in anticipation of Sanction on behalf of "Hon'ble Governor of Uttarakhand" for following works. All other information will be available online from date 23-02-2026 at 5.00 P.M. onward on website <http://www.uktenders.gov.in>

Sl. No.	Name of Work	Earnest Money (₹ in Lac)	Cost of Tender (₹)	Validity of Tender (day)	Period of Completion (months)	Contractor's Category of Registration
1	Construction of 85m span Bridle suspension bridge at Belkhet in Quarala River under S.D.R.F. covered by Hon. C.M Announcement no. 341/2024.	9.33	5000.00 +18% G.S.T.	120	18	Category "B" and Above for Bridge works in any State Govt./ Govt. of India/ Govt. undertaking.

**GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER: PW (HEALTH & EDUCATION) DEPARTMENT: CHANDMARI, GUWAHATI-3**  
No. Tech-I(H&E)/86/2022/45

**PRESS NOTICE**

The Chief Engineer (Health & Education), P.W.D. (H&E), Assam, Chandmari, Guwahati-3 on behalf of the Governor of Assam, invites bids from the eligible contractors having experience in similar nature of work for the following work:

Sl. No.	Name of work	Bid Value (including GST @18%)	Completion Period	Bid Security	Cost of Bid
1	Construction of Model Women's College at Jaleswar, Goalpara (Balance Work)	Rs. 17,06,41,907.00	24 (Twenty four) months	2% of Bid value for General category and 1% of Bid Value for reserved Category	Rs.20,000.00

Details of the bid may be seen at e-procurement website i.e. [www.assamtenders.gov.in](http://www.assamtenders.gov.in). The bidders must be enrolled with the tendering web-portal [www.assamtenders.gov.in](http://www.assamtenders.gov.in). All terms and conditions will be as per the Bidding Documents. The Press Notice will be a part of the Bidding Documents. The Bid price may vary at the time of detail tendering for which no claim will be admissible.

Sd/-  
Chief Engineer (Health & Education), PW(H&E) Deptt., Chandmari, Guwahati-3  
DIPR/C/PIO/900/20-Feb-26 Dated Guwahati the 19th February, 2026

**GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER: PWD BUILDING: ASSAM: GUWAHATI-3**  
No. CE/TB-II(Bldg.)/11/2026/01

**PRESS NOTICE**

The Chief Engineer, PWD (Building), Assam, on behalf of the Governor of Assam, invites bids from eligible contractors/firms having requisite experience in similar nature of works for the following work. Details of the bid may be seen at e-procurement portal website i.e. [www.assamtenders.gov.in](http://www.assamtenders.gov.in). The Bidders must be enrolled in [www.assamtenders.gov.in](http://www.assamtenders.gov.in).

Sl. No.	Name of work	Approx. Value of work (in Rs)	Bid Security	Cost of Document (in Rs)	Completion period
1.	Refurbishment works in new office space (2000 sq.ft) of ASRLM at Panjabari, Guwahati-37	Rs. 55,29,976.00	2% for General category or 1% for Reserved category on value of work	1,106.00	06 (Six Months)

N.B. (i) Value of work may vary according to the detail NIT.  
(ii) All terms and conditions will be as per the Bidding Documents.  
(iii) The Press Notice will be a part of the Bidding Documents.  
(iv) Final Work Order will be issued only after receipt of AA

Sd/-  
Chief Engineer, PWD (Bldg.) Assam, Chandmari, Guwahati-3  
DIPR/C/PIO/896/20-Feb-26

**GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER (ROADS), PUBLIC WORKS ROADS DEPARTMENT ASSAM, CHANDMARI, GUWAHATI-03**  
No. CE/DEV/TB/55/2025-26/05

**PRESS NOTICE INVITING TENDER (RE-BID)**

The Chief Engineer (Roads), PWRD, Assam, Chandmari, Guwahati-3 invites Bid on behalf of Governor of Assam for **1 (One) no. of package for Improvement of Roads under Mukhya Mantrir Pakipath Nirman Achari (MMPNA) under RIDF-XXXI of NABARD for the year 2025-26 in Goalpara District of Assam amounting to Rs. 445.20 Lakh (approx.)** including GST etc. from approved & eligible Contractors registered with PWRD, Assam.

Details may be seen from 19-02-2026 at website [www.assamtenders.gov.in](http://www.assamtenders.gov.in). Amendment /Addendum to the SBD, if any, and further notifications shall appear in this website and also at the office of the undersigned during office hours. The contractor/bidder must be registered with the Electronic Tendering System (ETS) of PWRD, Assam website [www.assamtenders.gov.in](http://www.assamtenders.gov.in).

Schemes are not yet sanctioned by the competent authority. In the event of non - sanction of the schemes, the bids may be cancelled and no claim what so ever on this account shall be entertained from the bidders.

Sd/-  
Chief Engineer (Roads) PWRD Assam, Chandmari, Guwahati-3.  
DIPR/C/PIO/898/20-Feb-26

**GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, PWD GUWAHATI BUILDING CIRCLE-II, CHANDMARI, GUWAHATI-3**

**PRESS NOTICE**

The Superintending Engineer, P.W.D, Guwahati Building Circle-II, Chandmari, Guwahati-3 on behalf of the Governor of Assam invites bids for the following work having experience of similar nature of work from APWD registered contractors. Details of the bids may be seen at e-procurement portal website: [www.assamtenders.gov.in](http://www.assamtenders.gov.in) and also in the office of the undersigned during office hours. The bidders must be enrolled in [www.assamtenders.gov.in](http://www.assamtenders.gov.in) for participating in the bidding process.

Sl. No.	Name of work	Approx. Value of Work (Rs.)	Category of APWD (B) registered contractor
1	Construction and Vertical Extension of Seminar Cum Guest House Building with 1 No. of Floor (i.e. 2nd Floor) at Assam Science and Technology University, Guwahati-781013 during the year 2025-26	Rs.1,90,22,792.00	Class-I (A/B/C)

Note:-  
1. Any modification of tender may be seen in the portal [www.assamtenders.gov.in](http://www.assamtenders.gov.in).  
2. The prospective bidder must visit the work site before submission of tender.

Sd/-  
Superintending Engineer, P.W.D., Guwahati Building Circle-II Chandmari, Guwahati-3  
DIPR/C/PIO/894/20-Feb-26

**GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER (HEALTH & EDUCATION): P.W. (H&E) D.: CHANDMARI: GUWAHATI-3.**  
No.Tech-I(H&E)/52/2025/26

**PRESS NOTICE**

The Chief Engineer, Health & Education, P.W. (H & E) D, Assam, Chandmari, Guwahati-3 on behalf of the Governor of Assam, invites online bid in two bid system (Technical and Financial) from eligible contractors/ firms having experience in similar nature of work for the following work :

Sl. No.	Name of Work	** Approx. Value of Work (Including GST @18%)	Time of completion	E.M.D.	Tender Cost (Rs.)
1.	Construction of Sri Sri Aniruddhadeva Sports University, Chabua, Assam (Balance work)	Rs.54.65 Cr	18 (eighteen) months	(2% for General, and 1% for Resen/ed category)	30,000/-

Note:- 1. NIT value may be changed during uploading of tender in the website, which may be seen in Detailed NIT of the Bid document.  
2. The bidders must be enrolled in [www.assamtenders.gov.in](http://www.assamtenders.gov.in)  
3. Details of the bid may be seen at e-procurement website i.e. [www.assamtenders.gov.in](http://www.assamtenders.gov.in)  
4. All terms and conditions will be as per the Bidding Documents. The Press Notice will be a part of the Bidding Documents.

Sd/-  
Chief Engineer, Health & Education, P.W. (H&E), Chandmari, Guwahati-03.  
DIPR/C/PIO/895/20-Feb-26

## Himanta accuses Congress of allowing forest land encroachment in Assam



TONY DAS ■ Guwahati

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Thursday alleged that the Congress had allowed encroachment on 30 lakh bighas of forest land during its rule in the State.

He said 1.5 lakh bighas of the encroached land have been freed. Delivering his last speech in the outgoing Assam Assembly, Sarma said the BJP Government has

fought against several "Congress legacies" to carry forward a transformative journey of the State. "The Congress left 30 lakh bighas of forest land (almost 10 lakh acres) for encroachment. We have carried out eviction from 1.5 lakh bighas," he added. Not a single house of tribal families has been demolished during the eviction drive, he said, adding that they have been provided with land pattas.

"We are fighting the Congress legacy. We are fighting their legacies on multiple fronts — MMR, IIMR, child marriage, polygamy, corruption and many more... today, Assam is the shining spot of the Indian economy," he added. The Assam assembly elections are due in a few months.

## Priyanka releases Assam Congress 'charge sheet' against BJP Govt



Congress General Secretary and Chairperson of the party's Assam Screening Committee Priyanka Gandhi Vadra with State Congress President Gaurav Gogoi during unveiling of a 'charge sheet' against the State's BJP Government in Guwahati on Thursday

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Guwahati

Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Thursday released a 20-point 'charge sheet' against the BJP-led Assam Government in Guwahati, which accused the State administration of indulging in corruption and using its machinery to instil fear among minorities.

The 'charge sheet' was released by the Opposition party ahead of the assembly elections.

The Congress alleged that the BJP Government failed to keep its assurances of granting ST status to six indigenous communities and increasing the daily wage of tea garden workers to ₹351 during its decade-long regime.

Vadra, chairperson of the party's candidate screening committee for the Assam polls, is on a two-day visit to the State. The Congress also charged the BJP-led Government with "rampant corruption".



**TRANSGLOBE  
ADVISORS**

## Your Trusted Management Advisory

[www.transglobeadvisors.in](http://www.transglobeadvisors.in)

### Order Order

## Final report can be filed in Sabarimala gold theft case by Mar 31: SIT to Kerala HC



The SIT probing the alleged misappropriation of gold from Sabarimala on Thursday told the Kerala High Court that the final report can be filed before the jurisdictional court on or before March 31.

It made the submission before a bench of justices Raja Vijayaraghavan V and KV Jayakumar based on the assurance by the National Metallurgical Laboratory, Jamshedpur, that it will expeditiously test the samples collected from the Sabarimala artefacts and give a report at the earliest.

"In view of the said assurance, it is submitted (by the SIT) that the final report can be laid before the jurisdictional court on or before March 31, 2026," the bench noted.

The Special Investigation Team (SIT) told the High Court that it has collected a total of 36 samples in connection with the two cases of alleged misappropriation of gold from the Dwarapalaka (guardian deity) idols and the door frames of the Sreekoil (sanctum sanctorum).

## Fugitive militant linked to banned outfit nabbed by UP ATS after 31 years on the run

A militant associated with the banned Khalistan Commando Force (KCF), who had been absconding since 1995 after being out on bail, was arrested from Punjab by a joint team of the Uttar Pradesh Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) and Noida police, officials said on Thursday. The accused - identified as Sukhwinder Singh Dhillon, alias Dayal Singh aka Rakesh Sharma Chhinda, originally from Kapurthala in Punjab - was apprehended on February 18 from Mohali district where he had been residing, they said.

According to officials, Dhillon was an active member of the banned outfit and was wanted in a case registered at Sector 20 police station in Gautam Buddha Nagar under the Arms Act. He was arrested in the case in April 1993 after an AK-56 rifle and 121 cartridges were recovered from his possession, and was subsequently granted bail by a court in December 1993. He appeared before the authorities on few occasions after being granted bail, but went absconding since August 16, 1995.

## Bhojshala issue: MP HC asks Indore bench to club related petitions

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
■ Jabalpur

The Madhya Pradesh High Court has asked its Indore bench to club all petitions related to the Bhojshala Temple-Kamal Maula Mosque dispute in Dhar and hear the matter on February 23.

A division bench of Chief Justice Sanjeev Sachdeva and Justice Vinay Saraf transferred the case on Wednesday, ruling that the Indore bench should hear the matter for the convenience of all local parties since the 11th-century monument is located in Dhar. The High Court, located in Jabalpur, fixed the next date of hearing of the case on February 23 at the Indore bench.

Hindus consider Bhojshala a temple dedicated to Vagdevi (Goddess Saraswati), while the Muslim community claims the 11th-century monument to be the Kamal Maula Mosque. The complex is protected by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI).

As per the existing arrangement under the ASI's April 2023 order, Hindus are allowed to worship at the site every Tuesday, while Muslims are allowed to offer namaz every Friday.

lawyer for Hindu Front for Justice, one of the litigants -- who attended the hearing online, told PTI that the HC's direction was issued for the convenience of all parties.

The case will now be heard by the senior-most judge of the Indore bench, he said. On February 16, the Indore bench, citing a Supreme Court order dated January 22, 2026, directed that the writ petition pending before it be placed before a division bench headed by the Chief Justice or a senior HC judge within three weeks.

The Indore bench also said that pending petitions related to the dispute be placed before the Chief Justice at the principal bench in Jabalpur for appropriate orders, along with a pending writ appeal. The apex court had on January 22 directed the HC to unseal the scientific survey report of the disputed complex submitted by the ASI, and make it available to the parties so that they could file objections, if any.

The SC said the matter would be taken up for final hearing after objections are filed, and directed all parties to maintain the status quo at the disputed complex and comply with the ASI's April 2023 order until the final order is passed.



## Anil Ambani assures SC of cooperation in probe

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
■ New Delhi

Reliance Group chairman Anil Ambani has filed an undertaking in the Supreme Court that he will not leave the country without its prior permission and fully cooperate with agencies' probe into the alleged ₹40,000 crore banking and corporate fraud involving the Anil Dhirubhai Ambani Group (ADAG). In an affidavit filed before the top court, the industrialist stated that he was not a flight risk and has no intention to evade the process of law.

"I state on oath that I have not left India since July 2025, since the inception of the present investigations, and presently have no plan or intention to travel outside India. It is further undertaken that in the event any requirement of foreign travel arises, I shall seek prior leave and permission of this court before undertaking any such travel," Ambani said. "I, with utmost bona fide, have been fully cooperating with the investigating agencies in connection with the ongoing investigations and continues to extend complete cooperation," he added.

The submissions have been in response to a plea filed by



former bureaucrat EAS Sarma seeking a fair, prompt and dispassionate probe into the alleged massive banking and corporate fraud involving the ADAG, Anil Ambani and the group companies. The affidavit further stated that he has been summoned by the Directorate of Enforcement to appear on February 26, 2026, and undertook to appear and join the investigation on the said date.

"I undertake to fully cooperate with the authorities, while ensuring procedural clarity and preventing any suggestion of evasion or selective presentation of facts by the petitioner," Ambani said.

He submitted that the affidavit was being filed to demonstrate that his conduct

has been transparent, cooperative. Voicing displeasure over the "unexplained delay" in investigations, the top court on February 4 had directed the Central Bureau of Investigation and the Enforcement Directorate to conduct a fair, prompt and dispassionate probe into alleged fraud.

When Sarma expressed apprehension that he may flee, Ambani, represented by senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, assured the top court that he will not leave the country without its prior nod. The PIL filed by Sarma alleged systematic diversion of public funds, fabrication of financial statements and institutional complicity across multiple entities of ADAG.

## Delhi HC seeks lawyer's stand on TMC MP Mahua Moitra plea over shared custody of pet dog

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
■ New Delhi

The Delhi High Court on Thursday sought the stand of lawyer Jai Anant Dehadrai on a plea by TMC MP Mahua Moitra challenging a district court order refusing to grant her shared custody of pet Rottweiler called Henry.

Justice Manoj Kumar Ohri issued notice to Moitra's former partner on her appeal and asked him to file his response. Dehadrai said Moitra's case should be dismissed at this stage itself.

In her appeal in the High Court, the TMC leader said that in the interim order passed in November 2025, the district court failed to consider that Henry was given to her as her pet and he usually resided with her at her residence.

It said the district court's order deprived her of the love and affection of a pet she raised for two years.

"The appellant was a co-parent of



Mahua Moitra with dog Henry

Henry. Henry primarily resided at the appellant's residence from where he was admittedly taken by the respondent when he was trespassing," it further alleged.

The district court's interim order came on a lawsuit by Moitra seeking specific performance of an oral agreement

between her and Dehadrai for shared custody of the pet dog.

As an interim relief, she sought Henry's custody for 10 days every month. Moitra told the district court that having taken care of Henry, she developed deep emotions equivalent to being his parent.

On November 10, the district court held that Moitra did not have a prima facie case in her favour for shared custody of Henry for 10 days of every month and refused to pass an interim order in her favour.

The district court said Moitra was not claiming the ownership of the dog and her emphasis on the emotional aspect of "dog ownership" was misplaced as there was no concept of "parent of a dog" in the eyes of the law.

It further said there was no conversation to show that there was any sort of agreement between the parties regarding the shared custody of the dog.

## SC asks BCI to reconsider rule banning bar association leaders from contesting bar council polls

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
■ New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Thursday asked the Bar Council of India (BCI) to reconsider its rule which restrains office-bearers of bar associations from contesting elections to the state bar councils.

A bench comprising Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and Vipul M Pancholi passed the order on a plea filed by lawyer Dhanya Kumar Jain and disposed of the petition.



The plea challenged the Bar Council of India Uniform Rules (and Mandatory Guidelines) for the Elections of Bar Councils, 2016.

The impugned provision states that an advocate, who is an office-bearer of any bar association except the Supreme Court Bar

Association (SCBA), shall not be eligible to contest the election of a state bar council.

It further provides that the returning officer shall reject the nomination papers of any such person who was or is an office-bearer of any bar association on the date of notification of elections of the concerned state bar council.

While state bar councils are a statutory body, the bar associations are private organisations of lawyers practising in a particular court or tribunal.

## 'UCC in Gujarat will create progressive and equality-based legal framework'

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
■ Ahmedabad

Implementation of Uniform Civil Code (UCC) in Gujarat will create a "progressive and equality-based legal framework," retired Supreme Court judge Ranjana Desai said on Thursday. She is the chairperson of the high-level committee set up on February 4 last year by Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel to examine the need for UCC in the state and prepare a draft of the code.

A meeting of the high-level committee was held in New Delhi on Wednesday under the chairmanship of Justice Desai. The current status, progress and various aspects of the draft UCC were discussed in detail during the meeting, an official state government release said.

"The implementation of the UCC in the state will create a progressive and equality-based legal framework, and every citizen will get equal



Justice Ranjana Desai

justice and rights," the release quoted Desai as saying.

"The draft laws prepared by the committee so far were reviewed in this meeting, with a special emphasis on subjects like marriage, divorce, inheritance rights and adoption laws.

The committee also stressed that interests of all

communities are being kept in mind while preparing the draft with the aim of maintaining social harmony," the release added.

Other members of the committee include retired IAS officer CL Meena, advocate RC Kodekar, educationist Daxesh Thakar and social worker Gita Shroff.

## Mamata abused power in blocking I-PAC raids: ED tells SC

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
■ New Delhi

The Enforcement Directorate has alleged "gross abuse of power" by the West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and the state machinery by "illegally barging" into raids at the I-PAC office and the premises of its director in connection with an alleged coal pilferage scam.

The agency rejected the West Bengal Government's submission that Banerjee and the police had intervened to prevent "armed persons impersonating officials of Central agencies" from conducting an unauthorised search.

The ED said its officials had duly displayed their ID cards during the January 8 raid and search authorisation to the police officers.

"The bare perusal of the facts would reveal gross abuse of power by the State machinery of the State of West Bengal. Senior officials of the State Police have colluded and obstructed the discharge of functions by officials of the ED under the PMLA, in the private interests of Mamta Banerjee the Chief Minister of the State of West Bengal," the ED submitted in its rejoinder (reply) in the top court.



Rejecting the State Government's claim that the case relates to federal relations and cannot be entertained, the ED said it is seeking an FIR against the "blatant abuse of power" by state functionaries and commission of offences by them.

The agency claimed that the police escorted Banerjee into the premises where an active search was going on and forcibly retrieved incriminating material.

"Individuals took away documents collected and indexed by the ED officers. The back-up process for the computer and email dump was also stopped midway. Ms. Banerjee, assisted by the State police officers, forcibly took away the computer installed in the premises.

"The State police on the instructions of Banerjee forcibly took away the

mobile phones of the employees of M/s Indian PAC Consulting Pvt Ltd, present at the premises.

They took the laptop of the ED officer and a mobile phone of the officer and returned it after two hours.

The taking of the laptop and mobile phone and keeping in their possession for two hours amounts to theft," the agency said.

The federal probe agency said the CM entered the IPAC premises with her Z-plus security in "complete disregard of the lawful proceedings that were already underway."

The heavy presence of police personnel to the tune of hundreds itself demonstrates coercion by the State Police and interference with lawful search under the PMLA by the ED officers.

## HC upset over absence of CBI counsels in 2G scam appeal final hearing

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
■ New Delhi

Delhi High Court expressed displeasure over the absence of CBI counsels at the start of final hearing of 2G scam appeal cases filed by the agency. Postponing the next date of hearing to May 19, Justice Swarana Kanta Sharma directed CBI to start arguments.

"No one is present on

high profile case, which is going on snail pace.

It took 126 hearing to get basic procedure of leave to grant appeal, which normally gets in 3-4 hearings in majority of the cases. After granting leave to grant appeal for CBI and ED in March 2024, the High Court had issued orders for speedy trial. But more than six months, CBI and High Court Registry were in loggerheads



behalf of the CBI in the present case when the matter has been taken up. In the interest of justice, adverse orders are deferred," said the daily order uploaded on Thursday on the court's proceeding on February 12. Enforcement Directorate's counsels were present.

CBI and ED filed appeal against trial court's order acquitting all the accused in the 2G scam cases on March 2018. Already 17 judges have heard the appeal for the past eight years. Already 140 hearing took place in the

on the digitisation of documents in 18 trunks. After seven hearing, the High Court had ordered Registry to hand over digitised documents to CBI and all the accused persons and companies.

The last three hearing, final argument not started due to the absence of accused persons' lawyers, seeking time. For the past eight years CBI is represented former ASG Sanjay Jain.

Along with other advocates of CBI, the agency's SP level officer will also present in the appeal.

## Cough syrup deaths: SC pulls up pharma firm for tarnishing image of country

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
■ New Delhi

"Do you realise what dent it has caused to the country's image," the Supreme Court on Thursday asked a pharmaceutical firm whose cough syrups allegedly resulted in death of more than 18 children in Uzbekistan.

A bench of Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and Vipul M Pancholi refused to quash an order which summoned the firm and some of its officials on a complaint alleging various violations including manufacture and sale of drugs declared "not of standard quality".

"Only for the sake of money, you indulge into this? The nation's image is dented due to this," the bench said.

The counsel for the firm and its officials said there was nothing on record to show that consumption of

the syrup has caused any death.

"Do you realise what dent it has caused to the country's image?" the bench asked.

The top court refused to interfere with the Allahabad High Court verdict that had dismissed the pleas filed by the firm and some of its officials, who had challenged a January 2024 summoning order passed by the chief judicial magistrate of Gautam Buddha Nagar.

The chief judicial magistrate had passed the order in a complaint case filed under the provisions of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940 in Noida.

The top court was hearing a plea filed against the High Court's order.

A complaint was filed by the drugs inspector alleging various violations including manufacture and sale of drugs declared "not of standard quality" and further invoking sections related

to adulterated and spurious drugs, procedural non-compliance, and liability of company officials.

In its order, the High Court noted the case was primarily founded on a test analysis report declaring certain samples "not of standard quality", resulting in proceedings under relevant penal sections of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940.

During the arguments in the matter before the High Court, the counsel appearing for the Centre had claimed that syrup manufactured by the firm was found poisonous in Uzbekistan, which resulted in death of more than 18 children.

While dismissing the pleas challenging the summoning order, the High Court had held there appeared to be no illegality or infirmity in the summoning order passed by magistrate.

# पहला कदम बदलाव का, एक साल विकास का



माननीय प्रधानमंत्री श्री नरेन्द्र मोदी जी के मार्गदर्शन में दिल्ली ने बदलाव की राह पर पहला मज़बूत कदम रखा है।

**24x7**  
फॉर  
**2047**  
#विकसितदिल्ली



**फ़रवरी 2025**  
सेवा की शुरुआत

- शायद ग्रहण के साथ सेवा और सुरासन की शुरुआत
- पहली फेब्रिनेट बैंक में विकसित दिल्ली का रोडनेप तय
- आयुष्मान जन आरोग्य योजना लागू की गई

**मार्च 2025**  
यमुना सफ़ाई का शंखनाद

- यमुना सफ़ाई और साफ़ पानी के लिए ₹9,000 करोड़
- ₹1 लाख करोड़ का ऐतिहासिक बजट
- युगी विकास के लिए ₹700 करोड़ आवंटित हुए

**अप्रैल 2025**  
मुफ़्त इलाज की मिली गारंटी

- 70+ आयु के बुजुर्गों को ₹10 लाख तक का मुफ़्त इलाज
- आयुष्मान वयद दवा योजना से 2.7 लाख से ज्यादा बुजुर्गों को लाभ
- देश में मिलीजबब वेजेंस सबसे अधिक किया - 40 लाख से ज्यादा मज़दूरों को लाभ

**मई 2025**  
लास्ट माइल कनेक्टिविटी का हुआ विस्तार

- नई DEVM बसों की शुरुआत
- आयुष्मान आरोग्य मंदिरों पर काम शुरू हुआ

**जून 2025**  
हेल्थ सर्विसेस घर के पास

- फेज-1 में 33 आयुष्मान आरोग्य मंदिर और 17 जनऔषधि केंद्र शुरू
- नदेला में नया EV OTC बस डिपो 90 दिनों में तैयार

**जुलाई 2025**  
व्यापार और युवाओं को मिली नई उड़ान

- 1,200+ नर्सिंग और 41 पैरामेडिकल कर्मियों को पककी नौकरी
- पुलिस लाइसेंसिंग स्वयं, बिजनेस करना हुआ आसान
- कांस्ट्रक्शन सेक्टर को ₹11 लाख तक की मदद, 1200 यूनिट तक विजिली की

**अगस्त 2025**  
ऐतिहासिक स्कूल फ़ीस एक्ट

- दिल्ली स्कूल एजुकेशन एक्ट 2025 - प्राइवेट स्कूलों की फ़ीस मनवानी पर रोक
- फिर से शुरू हुई यू-स्पोरल बस सर्विस
- नर्सिंग इंटरर्स का स्ट्राइक ₹500 से बढ़कर ₹13,150 किया गया

**सितंबर 2025**  
दिल्ली का ट्रांसफॉर्मेशन

- 50 साल बाद दिल्ली को मिला नया डेज़ेज मास्टर प्लान
- पहला बायो-गैस प्लांट
- स्कूलों में 3 नए पाठ्यक्रम- NEEEV, साईंस ऑफ़ लिटरिंग और राष्ट्रीयता लागू
- विकसित दिल्ली सीएम डेवेलपिंग प्रोग्राम
- नंद नगरी-गगन सिनेमा प्लाज़ाओर का उद्घाटन

**अक्टूबर 2025**  
संस्कृति का केंद्र बनी दिल्ली

- ₹1,816 करोड़ की 19 STPs, ड्रेनेज और स्वच्छ पेयजल सुविधाओं हेतु परियोजनाएं
- पहली बार यमुना किनारे भव्य छह पूजा
- वर्षा बाद इंद्रिया गेट पर भव्य दीपोत्सव
- पानी बिल पर लेट पेमेंट सस्पेंशन योजना

**नवंबर 2025**  
सेवा, सम्मान और सुरक्षा

- श्री गुरु तेग बहादुर जी के 350वें शहादत दिवस पर भव्य समारोह
- 10,000 इलेक्ट्रिक हीटर का डिस्ट्रीब्यूशन
- महिलाओं को नाइट शिफ्ट में काम करने की अनुमति दी गई

**दिसंबर 2025**  
नए ज़िले, बेहतर एडमिनिस्ट्रेशन

- बेहतर एडमिनिस्ट्रेशन के लिए MCD Zone तथा ज़िलों की समान बांटी
- 45 अटल कैंटीन शुरू - सिर्फ ₹5 में खाना
- सिविल रंगा पीडित 36 परिवारों को सरकारी नौकरी

**जनवरी - फ़रवरी 2026**  
जनसेवाओं का विस्तार

- RBI के साथ MOU - दिल्ली सरकार को Market Borrowing की मंजूरी
- 81 नए आयुष्मान आरोग्य मंदिर, कुल संख्या : 370
- होली-दिवानी सिलेक्टर सप्लिडी, DDA छोड़े खालों में
- भाबर टैक्सी से साझेदारी, DTTDC - सरकार MOU
- दिल्ली लखपति विटिया, लाइली योजना घोषित
- SC/ST कॉलोनिंग हेतु ₹85 करोड़, 146 परियोजनाएं (9 उद्घाटन, 64 सिलान्मेंट)

सेवा का संकल्प, सुशासन की नीति, विकसित दिल्ली का लक्ष्य



## Editor's TAKE

### A win-win in a multipolar world

As India and France align their strengths in technology and strategic autonomy, the partnership emerges as a stabilising force in world politics

France has always been India's chosen partner in the West. India-France relations date back to early 1948, when the two established ties based on mutual trust, respecting each other's autonomous choices in world politics. It further matured in 1998 when the relations entered the strategic realm of defence, space and civil nuclear partnership under the Strategic Partnership framework. Since then, France has remained one of the most important suppliers of defence equipment to India and the trust has only built over the years. It is noteworthy that France did not disengage with India after the Pokhran nuclear tests. In this background, President Emmanuel Macron's recent fourth visit to India at the invitation of Prime Minister Narendra Modi further cements this relationship. The visit marks the elevation of a mature partnership into a "Special Global Strategic Partnership". This relationship thus is not limited to mutual cooperation in defence and other vital sectors but is a clear statement of intent of deep ties that encompass a common shared vision of world politics, especially in the Indo-Pacific region.

Indeed, defence remains the bedrock of this relationship. France is one of India's foremost defence partners. It is not just a supplier but also a co-developer of defence equipment. The induction of Rafale-Marine jets, collaboration on submarine programmes, helicopter and jet engine development, and the expansion of joint research between DRDO and France's defence agencies go well beyond buyer-seller dynamics and enter the realm of co-developers. For India, this strengthens indigenous manufacturing and reduces dependency risks.

For France, it deepens industrial integration with one of the world's fastest-growing defence markets. It is a clear win-win: India gets cutting-edge technology and a chance to develop it, while France gets access to one of the world's top defence markets. Equally significant is the convergence on civil nuclear energy and clean technologies. French expertise – particularly in large reactors and emerging Small Modular Reactors – can accelerate India's low-carbon transition. In turn, France gains a reliable partner in the Global South. With aggressive posturing by the US, France also needs to diversify and keep its foreign policy options open. Together, they reinforce energy security while advancing climate commitments under the Paris Agreement. Technology and innovation add another layer of synergy. Their call to democratise AI resources and bridge the global AI divide resonates strongly beyond Europe and Asia. France's invitation to India to actively shape G7 deliberations underscores that this is more than a goodwill gesture. France, as a leading maritime nation, shares an interest in a free, open and rules-based Indo-Pacific region, which aligns with India's vision of the region. Their collaboration through the International Solar Alliance demonstrates that this partnership extends beyond bilateral gains to tangible regional impact.

Besides, France has once again reiterated its firm support for India's permanent membership of the UN Security Council. This shows a rock-solid relationship that transcends the vagaries of choppy geopolitics.

## Bangladesh: India braces for a delicate reset

After the interim tenure of Muhammad Yunus, India is seeking stability and a practical reset in ties. However, rising radicalism, the BNP's wary stance towards New Delhi, and Dhaka's outreach to China and Pakistan will require careful diplomacy and pragmatic realism from both sides



PARUL CHANDRA

With the newly elected government led by Tarique Rahman now in place in Bangladesh, an anxious India will be hoping for stability both within its neighbouring country as well as in its bilateral relations with Dhaka.

A restive Bangladesh, where radical elements have been gaining ground, spells trouble for India's security, more so as the two nations share a long and porous 4,096-km border. Worryingly for India, insurgent groups from the northeast can also take advantage of the instability to again use Bangladesh as a safe haven.

While Prime Minister Narendra Modi could not attend Rahman's swearing-in owing to prior commitments, he has written to him inviting him to visit India. Signalling the inclination on both sides for a rapprochement, the PM's missive expressed India's willingness to strengthen bilateral ties.

Having faced a rough time during the tenure of the Muhammad Yunus-led interim government following Sheikh Hasina's August 2024 ouster, New Delhi is clearly keen to mend its frayed ties with Dhaka.

Pragmatism, New Delhi knows, is the better part of valour. Towards this end, India made swift overtures to the Bangladesh National Party (BNP) leader, with PM Modi wasting no time in calling Rahman to congratulate him on his party's win, promising India's support for "a democratic, progressive and inclusive Bangladesh".

This, even though New Delhi has had to swallow the bitter pill of its staunch ally, former PM Sheikh Hasina, being forced into political exile in India and her party, the Awami League, being excluded from the electoral process. While the Sheikh Hasina government was mindful of Indian strategic interests, it was accused of authoritarianism and significant backsliding of democracy within Bangladesh.

New Delhi's unabashed tango with the deeply unpopular Sheikh Hasina regime, and the sway it had over Dhaka until she was unseated by the July 2024 uprising, helped fan the strong anti-India sentiment currently prevalent in Bangladesh.

Putting all its eggs in one basket, as has been New Delhi's approach when dealing with favourable regimes in the neighbourhood, has often worked to its detriment, leaving it out in the cold when an anti-India government sweeps into power.

With the BNP winning a thumping two-thirds



DHAKA'S TIES WITH NEW DELHI UNDER THE BNP GOVERNMENT ARE EXPECTED TO BE MORE TRANSACTIONAL. BE THAT AS IT MAY, NEW DELHI WILL JUST HAVE TO DEAL WITH THE NEW REALITY — BE HARD-NOSED IN ITS APPROACH WITHOUT ALIENATING THE NEW REGIME IN DHAKA

The writer is senior journalist and writes on strategic affairs

dailyopinion @ParulChandraP The Pioneer

majority in the Jatiya Sangsad (Parliament) elections, New Delhi knows it has no option but to work with a party that has been traditionally anti-India in its stance. The BNP, on its part, has indicated its willingness to engage constructively with India in ties "guided by mutual respect, sensitivity to each other's concerns, and a shared commitment to peace, stability, and prosperity in our region."

But the road ahead for a reset in ties will be difficult and challenging. For one, the Yunus-led interim government, with its marked anti-India stance, has already queered the pitch for New Delhi, stepping up ties with China and embracing Pakistan, a nation that was kept at arm's length by Sheikh Hasina. The outreach to Islamabad is particularly worrisome for New Delhi given the BNP's close links to Pakistan.

Pakistan can foment trouble for India in Bangladesh by stoking extremism in a country where there is growing radicalisation. While it is a matter of relief for India that the Jamaat-e-Islami has not come to power, it is noteworthy that the Islamist outfit has won 68 seats, its highest tally ever. While nationalism may have trumped radical elements, the BNP itself is not known for its secular credentials.

The youth-led National Citizen Party (NCP), formed in the wake of the July uprising and part of the 11-party alliance led by the Jamaat, has won only 6 of the 30 seats it contested. Even if realpolitik impels Dhaka to have cordial ties with New Delhi, it will have to deftly handle criticism such a move may evoke from these two outfits with deep animosity towards India.

Despite the positive signals emanating from

both New Delhi and Dhaka, bilateral ties will be framed by a new paradigm. Rahman has already indicated that his government will pursue a foreign policy that will have the interests of his country in mind and not align with any nation. New Delhi will have to use deft diplomacy and redouble efforts to ensure its interests are protected and strategic space is not ceded to China or Pakistan.

However, unlike Sheikh Hasina, who was willing to take a soft stance on New Delhi's failure to deliver on the Teesta waters-sharing agreement, it is unlikely that the new government in Dhaka will adopt a similar stand. Rahman, in whom the people of Bangladesh have pinned a lot of hope for good governance, will be under pressure to deliver.

A fragile economy makes this task all the more difficult. While India has often assisted neighbours in dire straits, it will need assurance from Dhaka that its security interests will not be compromised while playing the role of its foremost important development partner.

As the bigger neighbour, India will also need to address the issue of trade imbalance, skewed in its favour, that remains a sticking point with Dhaka. As for connectivity, New Delhi will need to frame it in a manner that Bangladesh sees itself gaining from these projects too.

Dhaka's ties with New Delhi under the BNP government are expected to be more transactional. Be that as it may, New Delhi will just have to deal with the new reality — be hard-nosed in its approach without alienating the new regime in Dhaka.

The Pioneer SINCE 1865

## PIC TALK



A black-naped oriole sits on a blooming Bombax ceiba tree. PHOTO: PTI

## A world confused by competing knowledge systems



RAJYOGI BRAHMA KUMAR NIKUNJ JI

### 2ND OPINION

In present times, there are so many varying concepts, theories and paradigms available to mankind in all fields of knowledge that man is confused as to which one is truly valid and superior in its results. For example, in metaphysics, there are a very large number of concepts concerning the soul, God, the world, hell, heaven, etc., and each one of these is more or less divergent from the others, with some even diametrically opposed. Similarly, in theology, theosophy and religious philosophies, there is great diversity of doctrines. Thus, amidst this vast and almost bewildering variety of views or beliefs about the self, the creator and liberation, man stands nonplussed.

Seeing this deep mist and haze, some have decided never to make any effort at all to discover the self or to search for the real identity of those around them, thinking that

it would be futile to do so. Likewise, they consider all talk of religion, philosophy or spirituality as taboo without even examining whether the claims of any of these are genuine or false.

There are also many postulates, hypotheses and theories about the origin of the world and the appearance of mankind on planet Earth. These theories have divided humanity into various opinion groups and cults, each one vociferously supporting its favourite theory and condemning the beliefs of others. In this ongoing controversy about the origin of the world and the creator, man has gradually lost faith in his original divine nature.

Similarly, in the field of economics, there have been so many divergent theories that the global economy, as a whole, appears to be in disarray. Every expert in economics has presented complex formulations in such a sophisticated manner that, while studying these thinkers, a person of average intelligence stands in awe, and even highly educated individuals are often puzzled about what remedies should be applied to current global economic problems.

On the other hand, it is evident that the world economy is becoming increasingly complicated even as economic theories grow more complex and confusing. The suffering of nearly half the global population from poverty indicates that many of our economic models have failed.

The same may be said about politics. Some political theories place statecraft at the centre of civilisation, while others consider politics to be the last refuge of a scoundrel. Some thinkers describe politics as the noble art of governance, whereas others regard it as a murky pursuit dominated by individuals driven by the quest for power, often leading to corruption.

Various theories have classified forms of government into different systems of rule, with some even describing democracy as a distorted form of governance. Conversely, many leaders consider democracy the best system available. Karl Marx, in his theory of the state, predicted that the state would eventually wither away, resulting in a society without formal governance. Thus, it can be said that people today live in a state of profound confusion. No single human-made theory appears capable of harmonising all fields of knowledge and providing total clarity. Yet, many remain unaware that such wisdom is believed to emerge only once in a cycle of time, when the world is poised for transformation into a peaceful and harmonious order.

If this moment represents such a transition, it may be seen as an opportunity for clarity — a time when confusion can give way to understanding and renewal.

The writer is a spiritual educator and popular columnist

## DIGITAL EXPERIENCE

www.dailyopinion.com

facebook.com/dailyopinion @TheDailyPioneer instagram.com/dailyopinion linkedin.com/in/ThePioneer

## RENEWING GLOBAL COMMITMENT TOWARDS INCLUSIVE SOCIAL JUSTICE

World Day of Social Justice, observed annually on 20 February, aims to address poverty, unemployment and human rights violations across the globe. This year's theme, "Renewed Commitment to Social Development and Social Justice", highlights the importance of poverty eradication, full and productive employment, and social inclusion as interconnected pillars of development, as endorsed in the Doha Political Declaration.

The theme reflects both the progress achieved and the challenges that remain in ensuring social justice through an inclusive and holistic approach. Despite notable gains in poverty reduction, education and social protection coverage, concerns such as labour market informality and declining trust

in institutions persist. In India, nearly 90 per cent of the workforce remains employed in the informal sector, making the country vulnerable to widening social gaps and economic inequality. However, emerging challenges such as climate change, technological disruption and global instability demand comprehensive planning to ensure universal social justice for marginalised communities. Developments related to the Great Nicobar Project and AI-driven job disruptions underline the need for a recalibrated policy approach rooted in reform and community participation. Such measures are essential to build resilience against growing social vulnerabilities.

PRASUN K DUTTA | WEST BENGAL

Please send your letter to the info@dailyopinion.com. In not more than 250 words. We appreciate your feedback.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### India's AI leadership rising

The joint efforts of government and private AI enterprises can significantly strengthen the positive impact of technology-driven tools for users.

India has secured the third position globally in artificial intelligence competitiveness, according to Stanford University's Global AI Vibrancy Tool, marking a major milestone in the nation's AI journey.

India is steadily emerging as a central hub where talent, policy and infrastructure converge. The expansion from 38,000 GPUs to over 58,000 GPUs reinforces this foundation and signals India's ambition for leadership. The recent AI Summit was built around three key pillars - People, Planet and Progress - providing a balanced framework for social, economic and environmental development. Responsible AI development can help address concerns through better regulation and monitoring of digital platforms. It also holds immense potential to improve efficiency across sectors. With sustained collaboration between public institutions and private innovators, India can ensure that AI serves inclusive growth while maintaining ethical standards. India's AI journey is not merely about technological advancement but about building solutions that benefit society at large.

DIMPLE WADHAWAN | KANPUR NAGAR

### Shivaji's legacy still inspires

The nation paid heartfelt tributes to Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj on his birth anniversary, remembering him as a symbol of courage, foresight and just leadership. His life continues to inspire people to stand against injustice. Founder of the Maratha Empire, Shivaji Maharaj was not only a fearless warrior but also an efficient administrator and visionary leader. His commitment to Swarajya and good governance remains a guiding light even today. More than a historical figure, he represents moral strength and spiritual inspiration. His courage, administrative wisdom and commitment to justice continue to influence generations across India.

Shivaji Maharaj Jayanti, observed annually on 19 February, commemorates the birth of the great Maratha ruler. Revered as a brilliant military strategist, he led successful campaigns and was formally crowned Chhatrapati in 1674. The day is marked across the country, especially in Maharashtra, with cultural programmes, processions and tributes. This year marks his 395th birth anniversary. Celebrating Shivaji Maharaj is not merely about remembering the past but reaffirming values of courage, justice and self-respect that remain relevant even today.

BHAGWAN THADANI | MUMBAI

### AI Impact Summit: Shaping global AI

The news regarding the Prime Minister inaugurating the India AI Impact Summit 2026 and positioning India as the Global South's voice in Artificial Intelligence is highly encouraging. India's hosting of the Artificial Intelligence Impact Summit in the capital has created a strong impression among European and Asian nations. In his welcome address, Prime Minister Narendra Modi rightly emphasised that it is better to shape the technologies that will define the 21st century rather than merely use them. Artificial Intelligence will gain greater significance when India advances with the guiding principle of "welfare for all and happiness for all". The presence of global leaders such as Sam Altman, Sundar Pichai, Jensen Huang, Bill Gates, Emmanuel Macron and Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva helped the summit chart a meaningful global roadmap linking geopolitics with innovation. With sustained investment in research and development, AI can generate innovations that save time, energy and resources.

India's focus on adopting cutting-edge technology shows its intent to move from being a user to becoming a global leader. AI-driven R&D can truly make India a transformative force.

YUGAL KISHORE SHARMA | UTTAR PRADESH



## Learning from the legacy of Public Health of the Indus Civilisation

The Indus Civilisation engineered one of the world's most advanced drainage systems. Roads lined with covered brick drains were equipped with inspection chambers for cleaning and upkeep. This reflects the crucial thought that systematic removal of waste is essential to protect public health

**FIRST**  
**Column**

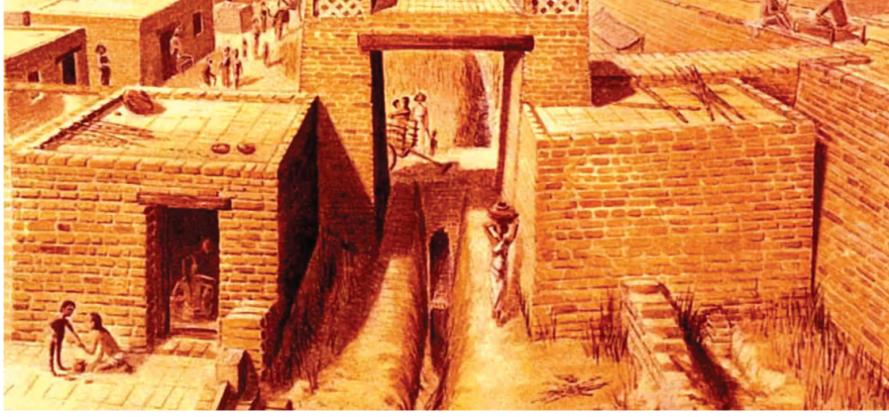


**P**  
**SHARMA**

The Indus Civilisation's hygiene and sanitation standards were millennia ahead of their time and provide valuable knowledge on public health as well as urban planning. Hailed as the "ancient world's most superior plumbing", in some ways it transcended even the plumbing methods that would later be generated by the Roman Empire. Development in sanitation has enabled people to coexist in cities with less risk to their health as compared to the past. Especially, the safe disposal of effluent to prevent the water supply from contamination has indeed proved to be a revolutionary innovation.

The fact that the city of Mohenjodaro alone had about 700 wells speaks volumes about the premium placed on the availability of clean water. This emphasises the fundamental need for access to safe drinking water as a vital aspect of public health. Today, we have the Jal Jeevan Mission, which is a major initiative of the Indian Government to provide clean, sufficient and regular drinking water via individual household tap connections to all rural houses. By making safe water available to village settlements, the women of the house are being freed from the daily inconvenience of walking long distances to fetch water. It entails measures such as rainwater harvesting and grey water management. It is an enterprise that encourages participation of common people through water committees and involves local communities like Gram Panchayats in planning, executing and managing their own water networks. Therefore, the Jal Jeevan Mission empowers communities to supervise their water resources in the long term and is proving to be instrumental in reducing waterborne diseases by ensuring the availability of pure drinking water.

Our ancient history acts as a repository of human experience. It offers profound lessons which would prove highly beneficial for the present. The Indus Civilisation pioneered novel systems of urban sanitation. The meticulous urban planning of the Indus Civilisation is unequivocally one of its most outstanding and remarkable features. The



**THE INDUS CIVILISATION PIONEERED NOVEL SYSTEMS OF URBAN SANITATION. THE METICULOUS URBAN PLANNING OF THE INDUS CIVILISATION IS UNEQUIVOCALLY ONE OF ITS MOST OUTSTANDING AND REMARKABLE FEATURES**

The writer is a Senior Research Fellow, Bharat Ki Soch

© bharatkisoach\_  
✉ @BharatKiSoch\_  
in BharatKiSoch

town planning sheds light on the highly developed civic organisations of the city. This sophisticated designing appears to be most impressive in the structural features relating to water supply and waste disposal techniques. Fresh water was supplied by a network of wells. The dirty water and other sewage of almost every unit were transferred into a drain that ran along the street outside. An indoor 'bathing platform' was a common domestic convenience. A distinct outlet in the exterior wall allowed the wastewater to flow into a soak pit or straight into the street drain.

The people of Mohenjodaro were provided clean fresh water exclusively by means of wells, vertically built (or sunken) brick shafts inside the urban area. The wells were made of specially designed, wedge-shaped bricks in order to make room for the smaller inner radius of the cylindrical well shaft. From a technical perspective, the cylindrical well shafts are an engineering marvel as they show that the circular form is statically best equipped to tolerate the lateral pressure bearing on wells 20 m or more deep. These circular brick-lined wells in all probability were the invention of the Harappans. Vertical water supply systems were practically unknown even in the cities of contemporary Egypt or Mesopotamia. It is estimated that Mohenjodaro must have been serviced by around 700 wells, with an average frequency of one in every third house. A water supply network of this magnitude within the city limits was a rarity at this period. A densely populated city like Mohenjodaro could not have been sustained in a semi-arid climate without

an independent water supply of its own.

The extravagant water consumption testified by the evidence of bathing platforms in almost every house and the sewer network density prove that the quantity of water utilised by the people at Mohenjodaro was much beyond their personal hygiene needs.

It is also probable that water played a significant part in the consciousness of a community whose agricultural cycle depended solely on the annual flooding of the River Indus. Possibly, the Harappans attributed supernatural powers to the river. The largest building in the city was an imposing elevated public bath. The Great Bath of Mohenjodaro measured approximately 900 square feet, with a maximum depth of around 8 feet. The construction shows evidence of fine brickwork. The pool floor was made of three layers wherein two outer layers of sawn brick set in gypsum mortar had bitumen sealer sandwiched between them. The building of the actual basin is a technical masterpiece which testifies to the extraordinary level of Harappan engineering. The use of bitumen for sealing water-using structures was one of its kind. The Great Bath of Mohenjodaro can be viewed as the most important water-using structure belonging to the Bronze Age. The reputation of the bath house as the city's biggest and most prominent edifice underlines the pivotal cultural value of water and hygiene.

Almost every home in Mohenjodaro had its bathroom located on the street side of the building for the easy disposal of

wastewater into the street drains. Ablution spots stood adjacent to the latrines, thus supporting one of the modern principles of hygiene. In instances where baths and latrines were present on the upper floor, they were usually evacuated by vertical terracotta pipes with closely fitting spigot joints, set in the building wall. These ancient terracotta pipes can be understood as the predecessor of our present-day clay spigot-and-socket sewer pipe.

An astounding accomplishment of civil engineering achieved by the Indus culture is the web of pollutant drains built of brick masonry along the roads of Mohenjodaro. These drains had coverings of bricks or wooden planks which could be easily removed for cleaning. A cesspool was installed to prevent clogging in cases where a drain had to cover a longer distance or several drains converged. Apart from the closed sewerage installations for disposing of domestic waste, open soak pits were also commonly used, especially where small lanes opened onto bigger streets. The settled deposits of these pits had to be cleaned periodically. It was not a common phenomenon for the houses to be connected to the sewerage system through individual house drains, as the bathing and toilet amenities were often on the street side of the houses where the wastewater travelled straight down via a chute into the public drain below. The maintenance of the drains must have required adequate manpower.

The model of impeccable Harappan hygiene and sanitation works becomes extremely relevant in contemporary times when we as a nation and world are facing severe challenges relating to water management. For instance, the close proximity of sewer lines and water pipelines poses a constant threat of contamination of water. One needs to look to our past and imbibe the practices that enabled the Harappans to remain healthy and disease-free as early as 3000 BC.

Water management directly affects public health by making safe drinking water available, preventing the outbreak of diseases, and assisting sanitation services.

Contaminated water causes illnesses such as typhoid, cholera and dysentery, targeting particularly vulnerable populations. With the rapid increase in population and the creation of new settlements,

the way in which the Harappan town's grid layout or urban planning incorporated sanitation from the very outset has a major lesson for us. It highlights the necessity of integrating adequate infrastructure and public health considerations into the basic design of new cities rather than implementing sanitation as a remedial measure.

Another learning that the Harappan instance carries is that sanitation should be a core civic priority cutting across socio-economic divides. Most houses in Mohenjodaro and Harappa, whether humble or elaborate, had access to a bathroom connected to covered drains. This implies that cleanliness or hygiene was not a privilege reserved only for those belonging to the upper echelons of society.

The Indus Civilisation engineered one of the world's most advanced drainage systems. Roads lined with covered brick drains were equipped with inspection chambers for cleaning and upkeep. This reflects the crucial thought that systematic removal of waste is essential to protect public health. Such an insight is extremely pertinent in the context of modern cities grappling with the issue of clogged drains and unmanaged waste. We can learn from this by maintaining and upgrading ageing sewer systems.

The presence of such a complex, consistent infrastructure across the Indus cities hints at a society with people who shared a strong sense of belonging and civic responsibility and were committed to actively contributing to the well-being of the community as a whole. The entire sanitation framework seems to have rested on a cooperative civic organisation. It hints at the key role that the people of the Indus Civilisation must have played in maintaining the sanitation works.

The Swachh Bharat Mission emphasises that it is every citizen's social responsibility to contribute to a clean environment. This involves proper management of household waste. We must never dump materials that obstruct drains. We should strive to incorporate the above-mentioned features of the Indus Civilisation relating to proper waste management, meticulous urban planning, robust sanitation infrastructure, and the availability of pure drinking water in our city spaces. By doing so, Indian citizens will be making efforts to continue the legacy of the Indus Civilisation. Let us all, with unflinching resolve, work towards a Swachh Bharat.

**The Pioneer**  
**SINCE 1865**

## Bullet-shy PLA pressed for a bulletless border but continued bullying and brutality



**ANIL**  
**BHATT**

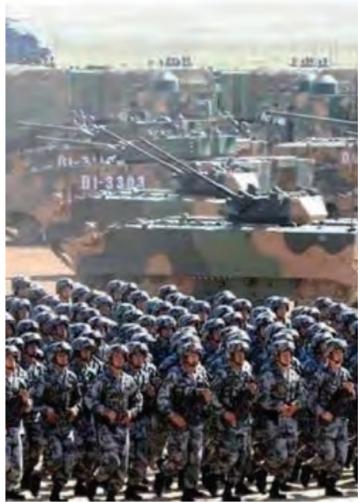
In early February 2026, Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi caused the eruption of a controversy in the Lok Sabha when he attempted to read from a magazine article quoting from an unpublished memoir by former Army Chief General MM Naravane, titled *Four Stars of Destiny*. Gandhi claimed that the excerpt indicated that in 2020, during the India-China border standoff, the political leadership did not provide prompt, clear orders when informed of Chinese tanks advancing and accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh of passing the buck. The BJP heavily contested that Gandhi was quoting from an "unverified", unpublished manuscript, which they asserted violated parliamentary rules against using such material in the House, and some ministers accused him of creating a "fake news factory".

Some basic characteristics of the Communist Party of China (CPC) and the People's Liberation Army (PLA), which it is very relevant to point out, are expansionist assertiveness, coercion and intimidation, information control and propaganda, economic coercion, coercive diplomacy and lying as a policy tool. The Chinese are great at projecting their men and machines of war in large, impressive army parades and war games, but on the battlefield:

- A major, widely cited weakness of the PLA is that it has not fought a major, sustained conflict since the Sino-Vietnam War in 1979, which was considered a failure with heavy casualties.
- In high-altitude, cold conditions like the Himalayas, some reports have questioned the readiness and endurance of Chinese troops, highlighting that they have faced issues with altitude sickness.
- The "one-child policy" has resulted in a lack of the toughness required for brutal, hand-to-hand, or sustained, high-intensity warfare.

The book, *China Bloodies Bulletless Borders*, authored by this writer, includes an analysis of the complex, long-term and often violent, yet officially "bullet-less" (without use of firearms) border management by the Indian Army with restraint against the PLA's aggressive, psychological and physical tactics/methods.

From September 11-14, 1967, a conflict was sparked off in Sikkim when Chinese troops opened heavy machine-gun fire and artillery



shelling on Indian soldiers installing a wire fence. While local commanders on the ground up to Major General Sagat Singh, the Divisional Commander, pushed for a strong response to Chinese aggression, the decision to use artillery required approval from the Prime Minister's Office. Then PM Indira Gandhi gave the approval and the Indian Army responded aggressively with artillery, resulting in well over 400 PLA personnel getting killed and many wounded. This was a rude shock to the PLA and the Communist Party of China (CPC), who then pressed very hard for 'no firing at each other', which India agreed to. Yet, on 20 October 1975, PLA troops ambushed and killed four riflemen of the 5th Battalion of the Assam Rifles not by firing, but by brutally torturing them at Tulung La in Arunachal Pradesh. 5 Assam Rifles is renowned as the "Dalai Lama Battalion" because it escorted the 14th Dalai Lama to safety during his escape from Tibet into India in 1959.

A pact specifically prohibiting the use of firearms was signed in 1996, following an initial broader peace agreement in 1993 and repeated in 2005 and 2013. For over half a century since 1967, the PLA took great advantage of not being fired at by the Indian Army and continued its attempts at salami slicing.

A very basic drawback of the Indian Army was adhering to an agreement of not using firearms even after the PLA brutally killed the Commanding Officer of 16 Bihar Regiment and nineteen other ranks on 15 June 2020, making a mockery of the bulletless pact by using crude medieval weapons like rods with nails bound with barbed wire. Indian Army personnel who immediately reacted did so without

firearms. Reports in 2020-2022 indicated that a large number of Chinese soldiers died during the June 15, 2020 Galwan Valley clash, often attributed to intense hand-to-hand combat and drowning in the icy river. While China officially acknowledged four deaths, reports based on investigations suggested 38-45 Chinese soldiers died. There were also unconfirmed reports of Indian troops killing many more than forty.

While this fierce retaliation by Indian troops put paid to the PLA's plans of further attacks, it resumed bullying. Following the violent clash which occurred near Patrolling Point 14 (PP-14) in the Galwan Valley, Chinese troops maintained positions in the area, resulting in the creation of a "buffer zone" that prevents Indian troops from patrolling up to their traditional limit. Satellite imagery indicated that China extended its road construction and established a full-blown post near the 90-degree bend in the Galwan River, which is closer to the confluence with the Shyok River than the pre-2020 Chinese positions. The effective LAC in the Galwan Valley shifted by roughly one kilometre in China's favour.

Beyond Galwan, the 2020 standoffs led to disengagement agreements that created buffer zones in other areas of Eastern Ladakh, including Gogra-Hot Springs (PP-17A) and the North Bank of Pangong Tso. These zones often involve Indian troops pulling back further than Chinese troops, blocking access to multiple traditional patrol points. While not directly in the Galwan Valley, the broader 2020 Chinese incursions blocked Indian access to five bottlenecks in the Depsang Plains (sub-sector north), preventing patrols to areas like PP-10, 11, 12, 12A and 13.

In a surprise master move on 29-30 August 2020, Indian forces pre-emptively occupied the Kailash Range, attaining an advantageous position to overlook Chinese positions at Spanggur Gap and Moldo. Forced to negotiate from a weaker position, the PLA again bullied, and in February 2021, the Indian Army vacated the Kailash Range as part of a mutual disengagement process. Analysts considered giving up a valuable hard-won high-ground territory as a major strategic loss as well as giving in to Chinese bullying. A heavy border standoff has continued as China continues maintaining a high troop presence in the region, countered proportionately by the Indian Army.

Meanwhile, it remains to be seen what 'RaGa' will do with a 'copy' of the now-famous book or what will be done to him.

The writer, Col Anil Bhat, VSM (Retd), a strategic affairs analyst and former spokesperson, Defence Ministry and Indian Army

© dailypioneer  
✉ @ColAnilBhat8252  
in anil-bhat-70b94766

## From Saptasandhu to Punjab: A civilisational journey



**RAMESH**  
**DAVESAR**

The Apeiron Legacy of Punjab traces its roots from the Indus Valley Civilisation and, having transited through various epochs had finally attained its present entity -The Punjab. It is worth taking a look at the interesting journey spanning various eras and generations. Originally named as 'Sapta Sindhu' during the 'Rig Veda Period' (1500-1000 years BCE), means, the land of seven rivers, these were: Sindhu, Vitastat(Jhelum), Asikni (Chenab), Parusani (Ravi), Vipasa (Beas), Shatudari (Satluj) and Saraswati. It is believed that during the Vedic Period (1000-500 years BCE), the Saraswati River, flowing between Yamuna and the Satluj Rivers, had started drying up and towards the end of this Period, it finally disappeared. Also, the Indus River was de-linked, hence, the Sapta Sindhu, left with five rivers, was rechristened as "Panchnaad" (land of five rivers) during 500-300 years BCE.

The early indications of spoken language had first come from the 'Mid Indo-Aryan Period' (600 BCE- 1000 CE), and were known as the Prakrit language. With successive refinements, its improved version that finally came out was called 'Apbhhransh' (mixed). The historical annals suggest that towards the end of 10th century CE, it led to the creation of Hindi, Panchnaad (Punjabi) and various South Asian dialects. Alongside, the "Sharda Script" - the mother of all was developed during the 8-9th Centuries CE. It was named after the ancient University and Centre of Learning at Sharda Shakti Peeth (located in Kashmir in Keran Sector close to the LOC in POK) which played a crucial role in its development and popularisation. It led to the creation of a mélange of scripts and one of them was "Landa Script". Primarily known as the Merchants' Script, it was also used for literary and administrative purposes and was soon adopted by Panchnaad language.

Around this period "The Nath-Yogi" Sect was launched by Saint Matsendranath aka Machhindernath, his teachings and the spiritual disciplines were profoundly discoursed in Panchnaad by his disciple- Yogi Gorakhnath further buttressed the spread of local dialect.

In 14th Century, two historic events took place. One, the Sufi Saint Amir Khusrow in order to bridge the gap between the two contrasting morphemes, the Sanskrit predominant Hindi and the Persian, evolved a new lexicon named as "Zubane Ordu" (Urdu) written in Persio Arabic Script.

It soon achieved mass acceptability and was monikered as "Shahmukhi Script" in the North and

the North western regions and was subsumed as the primary script by the Panchnaad language. Two, Iban Battuta, a Maghrebi (North African) an explorer from Morocco, arrived in India in 1334 and stayed till 1342. During his sojourn, it is learnt that he had changed the name of Panchnaad with the Persian epithet - Punjab; the same had been documented in his Book- Rihla

(travelogue). Axiomatically, its language, hereafter was known as the Punjabi. Concomitantly, the Sufi Cult led by Sheikh Farid had made its mark in Punjab, subsequently pursued by Bulle Shah, Waris Shah, Shah Muhammad, Shah Hussain, Damodar Das Arora from Jhang (the original Writer of Folk Tale Heer-Ranjha) and alike, by preaching and spreading the Sufi philosophy in Punjab had rendered a great service to the people and the culture of recently christened Punjab. Yet another monumental event was awaiting, the origin and spread of Sikhism and its preachings during 15th to 18th century marked an Era of spiritualism, consecration, social oneness and bonhomie amongst Punjabis. It was during this period, the Punjabi got its captive script, the Gurmukhi, devised by Second Guru, Sh Guru Angad Dev ji.

During the Mughal rule, amongst others, in order to refine and streamline the administrative set up, Raja Todar Mal, the Financial Virtuoso in Akbar's regime, subdivided Punjab into five Doabs (area between two rivers) and acronymed them from the names of the rivers binding the Doabs.

Starting from East; the area between Satluj and Beas Rivers was called Bist Doab (Jalandhar Hoshiarpur), the territory bound by Beas and Ravi Rivers was named Bari Doab (also called Majha, Amritsar, Lahore), the area between Ravi-Chenab Rivers was named Rachna Doab (Faislabad, Sialkot), the belt demarcated by Chenab and Jhelum Rivers was called Jhaji Doab (Sargodha, Gujarat), and finally, the Western-most was Sind Sagar Doab between Jhelum and the Indus Rivers (Rawalpindi, Chakwal).

Maharaja Ranjit Singh's rule from 1801-39 is best remembered for the social, religious, political and the egalitarian reforms. The gloaming of Sikh empire came after the Second Anglo Sikh War 1848-49 followed by the annexation of Punjab by the British in April 1849. After consolidating their hold, the Britishers took upon the task of improving the irrigation and the cultivation in Punjab.

It underwent three major partitions, the first one in 1901 when the NWFP was taken out followed by Delhi becoming the Capital Territory in 1911 and finally the cataclysmic schism in 1947 which dissected the State — the East and the West Punjab!

**The Pioneer**  
**SINCE 1865**

Col Ramesh Davesar is a Veteran who fought 1971 Indo-Pak War; had two years stint in the IPKF & command Battalion in the Valley

© dailypioneer  
✉ @TheDailyPioneer  
in dailypioneer



Despite the end of short-seller Hindenburg, which shut shop after its stock market attack on the Adani Group, the former's shadow still looms over the latter, and the allegations hang like several Damocles swords, ever ready to slip down. Despite consistent denials, hundreds of court cases, the legal fate of Anil Ambani, once one of the uncrowned kings of business, hangs in a delicate balance, with every step inching towards his possible arrest. Recently, a foreign media report stated that an Italian bank pursued some of the charges by Hindenburg, and acted against close associates of Gautam Adani's brother, Vinod. Anil Ambani told the Supreme Court that he would not leave the country without permission, and cooperate with the ongoing investigations led by the Enforcement Directorate, and Central Bureau of Investigation. The affidavit is related to an alleged fraud of ₹40,000 crore.

Stock prices of both the groups have wildly fluctuated, going up and down by a few percentage points on some days, even as bad or good news enters public domain. This is despite the repeated denials issued by the Ambani Group against the several charges, and Sebi's clean chit to the Adani Group on almost every charge mentioned by Hindenburg. Investors go back and forth, buying and selling the stocks, unsure of the future. At the same time, the two groups commit future investments. The Adani Group being much bigger offers more than the Ambani empire. These are among the rare cases, where judicial events, not just financial performances, and legalese impact the stock prices. In India, generally no one gives credence to legal cases, which are either delayed for decades, or buried under the auditor's fine print. Sometimes, however, they become overtly important and crucial.

A couple of weeks ago, the Supreme Court lashed out at the investigating agencies for the delays in the Ambani cases. The bench led by Chief Justice Surya Kant asked ED and CBI to finish them in a time-bound manner. The ED was ordered to form a special team, and CBI was asked to furnish separate FIRs for each bank's case, rather than a single voluminous FIR. The Court urged action against erring bank officials. This was in a petition, which alleged that the investigations were narrow, incomplete, and deliberately excluded the bank officials and public servants despite evidence that indicates their complicity. The petitioner wanted a probe to cover every offence under the court's directions. It was in this matter that Anil Ambani gave the affidavit, where he said that he had not left India since July 2025, ie, since the present case, and has no plans to do so. Yet, he would take the judicial permission, if required before he travels.

Adani is still immersed in the deluge unleashed by Hindenburg. According to recent media reports, despite the clean chit in India, from the Sebi and Supreme Court, the group is being investigated elsewhere. In the US, the market regulator, SEC, told a local court that it will issue summons to Gautam Adani, and his nephew via emails because India refuses to act officially. Adani then announced that he wanted to discuss the issues with the American regulator. Now, another report states that Italy's largest bank met associates of Vinod Adani, and found "suspicious activities against the two, and restricted their accounts." This was despite them rejecting the charges in a signed statement against the Hindenburg disclosures. The bank found that the two associates held \$1 billion and \$2 billion, respectively, in hedge funds with "underlying assets 'likely' invested in Adani companies. These holdings existed the day the Hindenburg report was released.

One of these associates, according to a media report, is under probe in Switzerland. This was possibly because the Italian bank found that the Dubai branch of a Swiss bank it took over had clients introduced by Vinod Adani, and his two associates. The two associates admitted that money was theirs, and clarified that the investments in Adani Group were "based on their trust in the business acumen of the members of that family." The associates were helped to trade in the stocks by an individual who worked for Vinod Adani. Given Vinod's plays with hundreds of millions of dollars to buy and sell Adani Group stocks, Gautam had initially distanced himself from the brother, and Vinod's name did not appear in related-party deals in the annual reports. After the Hindenburg report, Gautam changed tracks, acknowledged Vinod as a brother, and his name appears in related-party transactions.

This is a curious case of the A-Square economy being played out in the stock markets, tax haven nations, and by little-known players. Although, in the long term, they may lead to nothing, except Anil Ambani may find himself in a spot at regular intervals, the stock prices will gyrate in volatile fashion. Some investors will always gain, as they will buy and sell at the opportune times, and others will lose out being caught in a whirlpool of confusion, uncertainty, and information gaps. For Adani, the only way out is to show results in terms of revenues, profits, and ability to complete mega projects. For Ambani, the way out seems tougher, but he needs to do it to save his fledgling empire.



# 'Global' impact in bilateral deals

Bangladesh and Pakistan factors, among farm import fears

OUR TAKE



Jayanta Bhattacharya  
Senior Journalist

A bilateral deal with an immense global twist. It involves competition from Bangladesh, and an economic counter to Pakistan, apart from the concerns of the local cotton growers. The impact of the India-US trade deal encompasses issues related to industry, agriculture, and bilateral and global trade. This is most evident in the case of textile exports from, and cotton imports into, India. Couple this with rising, or lower competition in the export arena from two of India's neighbours. There is excitement, panic, worries, and confusion. Each side speaks different languages, including the trade deal negotiators.

Earlier this month, panic gripped India's textile and apparel exporters who had begun to celebrate the interim trade agreement between India and the US, and the possible adverse impact on Pakistan exporters. The US deal indicated a tariff of a mere 18 per cent, instead of the earlier combined 50 per cent. Yet, the dread among the exporters was triggered by the US-Bangladesh agreement, which was announced a few days later. In it, Washington decided to slash import duty on cloth exported by Dhaka, if it was made exclusively from American cotton. Hence, zero tariff on product exports in lieu of raw material imports.

In jargon terms, "Bangladesh to receive a zero reciprocal tariff rate," on "a to-be-specified volume of apparel and textile imports from Bangladesh," but only on "US-produced cotton and man-made fibre textile inputs, from the United States." In simpler terms, if a Bangladesh textile exporter imports either American cotton, or its petrochemical intermediates like fibre, it can export at zero tariff. There will be a cap on annual volume exported under this mechanism. Suddenly, the Indian exporters felt that Bangladesh exports, at least till the to-be-specified quota, would be cheaper.

The tensions were palpable in India, considering that textile and apparel exports to the US amount to \$11 billion, or nearly 29 per cent of

India's global exports. During the trade negotiations between India and the US, between April 2025 and January 2026, India's textile exports registered a degrowth of 2.35 per cent, according to the data by the Confederation of Indian Textile Industry. The data showed that textile exports in January 2026 declined by 3.68 per cent, and apparel exports were down by 3.84 per cent on a year-on-year basis.

Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal had to step in personally to assuage the emotions. He announced that the final India-US trade deal, which may be fully unveiled in March 2026, would have a similar clause like the Bangladesh one. So, exports from both the neighbours will be evenly matched, and Indian exports will be on a level-playing field. Ironically, once this was made public, the Indian industry revealed that the zero-tariff clause did not really matter. The earlier controversy about it seemed like 'much ado about nothing,' A lot of heat and dust.

According to RK Vij, President, Textile Association (India), zero duty based on input import and finished product export, may not always benefit the industry in the long run. He points out that American cotton is more expensive than Indian cotton, if one adds the logistics costs of imports, the landed price will offset the saved duty. India, indeed, has an edge over the other Asian cotton-growing textile competitors in the trade deal with the US. The lower tariff of 18 per cent on Indian goods is less than Bangladesh, which faces a duty of 19 per cent, or even a low-cost producer like Vietnam, with a tariff of 20 per cent.

In effect, garments usually face a 12 per cent duty as the most favoured nation tariff, which will bring the duty on Bangladesh to 31 per cent, and 30 per cent for India. The Tamil Nadu-based Southern India Mills' Association echoed the same sentiments and thoughts. It stated that 18

per cent is the lowest tariff negotiated by any competing country with the US. India's trade deals with other global economies and groups, like the UK and European Union (EU), will give a huge boost to Indian textile and apparel exporters, adds Animesh Saxena, general secretary, Garments Exporters and Manufacturers Association.

"The US deal will happen in a few weeks. The one with the EU will be operational in a few months. We see business growing by at least 30-40 per cent in another two years," explains Saxena. In fact, he takes a dig at the opposition from the Indian cotton growers, who fear the adverse impact on prices and demand due to American cotton imports. Saxena

feels that production is short of industry requirements. Farmer unions, as expected, think differently. They contend that the industry has repeatedly exaggerated the claims of shortages.

"Farmers fear that importing cheap, highly-subsidised American cotton will crash domestic prices. Prices have fallen below the minimum support price in several regions, and dropped by ₹1,000-1,500 per quintal after the recent duty exemptions," claims a statement from the Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM), a farmers' platform. In the crop year (October 1 to September 30) 2024-25, India imported 41.4 lakh cotton bales worth nearly ₹12,000 crore, of which more than 8.5 lakh bales were from the US, according to Textile Minister Giriraj Singh. These imports show the fallacies in claims that imports are expensive.

Yet, the ministry admits that a "combination of factors" affected production and yield. This is due to a "reduction in the area under cotton cultivation, adverse climatic conditions such as uneven rainfall and extreme temperatures in predominantly rainfed regions, negative impact of monocropping, a shift by farmers to remunerative crops, and the resurgence of pests and higher incidences of diseases," according to an answer to Lok Sabha question in December 2025. While India is the world's largest producer, the cotton output has moved from over 300 lakh bales in 2015-16 to less than 307 lakh bales in 2024-25.

"India was an exporter. In 2022-23, it opened imports with three lakh bales from Australia. After the US imposed a 50 per cent tariff, India allowed higher imports (to help industry). Now (with a trade deal), Goyal is saying that we will import cotton and export textile," alleges Rajan Kshirsagar, president, CPI-affiliated All India Kisan Sabha. (Between August and December 2025, duty on cotton imports to India was exempted as a "strategic move in response to escalating international and domestic pressures on India's textile and garment sector.") Like it or not, while the grower-to-manufacturer three-way tug-of-war between farmers, textile exporters, and the policy-makers, is not a zero-sum game, the benefits to each will differ widely.

(The Author has more than three decades of experience across print, TV, and digital media)



In the past decade or less, since Donald Trump first became the US president in 2017, academicians have tried to make sense of his policy world, and coined several terms to describe it. In 2018, one of them suggested the phrase, "illiberal hegemony," and an analyst called it "reciprocity" in 2025. In between, "Trump has been called a realist, a nationalist, an old-fashioned mercantilist, an imperialist, and an isolationist," writes Stephen Walt, a professor at Harvard Kennedy School, in a recent article in Foreign Affairs (March-April 2026). He coins a new term, predatory hegemony, to describe Trump's antics.

Another article in the same issue, by Alexander Cooley, professor, Barnard College, and Daniel Nexon, professor, Georgetown University, call the president's policy plays as "fundamentally kleptocratic." In essence, both talk in a similar language, though nuances exist between the two. In the first version, the aim is to use "Washington's privileged position to extract concessions, tribute, and display of deference from allies and adversaries... in what it sees as a purely zero-sum world." In the second, the aim is to "increase his own wealth, bolster his status, and personally benefit a small circle of his family members, friends, and loyalists," as foreign policy becomes subservient to private interests.

Hence, in both the caricatures, national interests are subsumed. Allies do not matter, and can bear the brunt of vicious attacks like those hurled on enemies, including China. Private matters more than public. In both cases, the zero-sum mindset prevails, or the conviction that either Trump or the US (which is essentially the same) will win, and take it all, and leave nothing for the other sides. In India, it was once said that Indira is India, and Indira is Indira. In the US, Trump is America, and America is Trump (and his family and loyalists).

Under predatory hegemon, the non-coherent, random, confusing, and confounding policies indicate a transactional approach, and an overriding belief that the US has "enormous and enduring leverage over nearly every country." This is evident from Trump's statement that the US is a "big, beautiful department store, and everybody wants a piece of that store." The White House press secretary, Karoline Leavitt once said that the American consumer is "what every country wants that we have," or to put it another way, "they need our money." The US is the all-encompassing gold mine, where every nation wants to dig.

Of course, any powerful nation experiments with predatory hegemon to extricate the best and most of the riches. But a benign

# A twisted tale of two Trumps

Will the real Trump stand up? Experts debate to name his strategy



one imposes unfair burden on allies when necessary, and believes in a positive-sum game to get the most benefits. A predatory one exploits friends and enemies equally. It existed in the Greek world, when Athens was a tyrant, Sino-centric system in the East, when China wanted complete respect, in the colonial worlds, and even as an outside expression of the Nazi regime in the last century. Trump is still different.

The current president's worldview is evident from unilateral tariffs because he believes trade regional and global ties.

Trump's wonderland. "Like a Mafia boss or an imperial potentate, Trump expects foreign leaders... to engage in demeaning shows of deference, and grotesque forms of flattery..." writes Walt. Leaders, who depart from this script, and Trump's theatrical demands, find themselves on the wrong side, like Prime Minister Narendra Modi learnt the hard way. Sadly, according to Walt, predatory hegemon, despite the initial and immediate, even overwhelming, successes, "contains the seeds of its own destruction."

Apart from other factors, the truth is that the US is not the only game in town. In a multi-polar world, nations have other choices to make more allies, and form regional and global ties.

administration attempts to "subvert the independence of... the institutions that have long made US foreign policy..." Hence, the personal or sectional ideology embeds with kleptocracy, and makes it more likely that this form of governance will "ensure after he (Trump) leaves office." Corruption, thus, no longer remains a means to an end. It is the end.

The collapse of institutions enables the cronies to have a free hand over foreign policy. Trump's de-facto top diplomat, Steve Witkoff, with no experience, sometimes single-handedly negotiates with the UAE, Iran, Israel, Russia, and Ukraine. His son-in-law, Jared Kushner, and another father-in-law, Massad Boulos, handle world regions, and nations. With "nebulous titles and mandates that do not trigger the kind of financial disclosures typically demanded of senior officials," these people run amok. For example, "it is difficult to know whether the December 2025 deal Boulos helped broker (between Washington and Kinshasa for preferential access of minerals) ... created conflicts of interest for him, Trump, or other administrative insiders."

Bundled with bilateral investment deals are those that benefit Trump, family, and friends. In the case of Qatar, which gifted a luxury jet to Trump that he intends to keep after he quits office, there are personal partnerships with a golf resort backed by UAE's sovereign fund. In the UAE, there are mega projects like Trump's son's plan for 80-storey Trump Tower in Dubai. Witkoff shepherded a deal to lift restrictions on a firm linked to UAE's national security adviser, as the latter purchased \$2 billion of stablecoin, whose co-founders include Witkoff, his two sons, Trump, and his three sons. White House denies Witkoff's role.

Even global conflict management spews profits. Witkoff and Kushner are involved in Ukraine talks, and possibly in opportunities "such as accessing \$300 billion in frozen Russian central bank assets for joint US-Russia projects" across several sectors. Even if there is no personal interest, there is a "permissive environment for political allies to profit." In January 2026, Ukraine awarded the mining rights of the coveted lithium deposits to a friend of Trump, Ronald Lauder, who wants the US to acquire Greenland. Kyiv wants to massage the American ego.



# Benefits of AI to be bigger for global south, India: Amodoi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
New Delhi

Anthropic CEO Dario Amodoi on Thursday said the benefits of AI in the Global South are more pronounced than anywhere else in the world, emphasising that India's considerable technical expertise and eagerness to adopt AI present significant growth potential.

In a fireside chat at the AI Impact Summit 2026, Amodoi said that while AI adoption has the potential to boost growth, we need to make sure that AI systems are safe and predictable and autonomously behave in a way that's under human control.

Stating that AI can be used to accelerate economic growth if the AI developers and those who do the actual medical research can work together in India, which has a large population base.

"There is so much technical potential and technical adapt-



Anthropic CEO Dario Amodoi addressing the gathering during the India AI Impact Summit 2026 in New Delhi

tiveness in India. It actually almost seems like a perfect case study for the idea that AI could really accelerate economic growth, because it seems like the base ingredients are, kind of, all there, and AI could help to tie them together," Amodoi said.

He said that in the devel-

oped world, AI usage could lead to a 10 per cent economic growth rate.

"Here in India, there's a lot of catch-up growth to be done. There's an enormous amount of technical potential and ability, and, as I'm seeing, there's this eagerness to adopt AI. So, India is one of

the few places in the world where I wonder could there be 20 or 25 per cent growth, which is, you know, sounds absurd, is unknown anywhere in the world, but, but as I think about this, it kind of stacks all the factors for a very bullish, picture of how that growth could happen," he said. Talking about artificial intelligence adoption in the Global South, Amodoi said that there's an opportunity for AI to accelerate growth and solve a bunch of problems that are in the way of catch-up growth.

"AI is technology that has big risks and big benefits, but, in the Global South, the benefits may be even bigger than they are anywhere else. But at the same time, that doesn't mean, of course, that the risks aren't real," he said.

Amodoi said, "We need to think about how democracies handle AI and how we confront other, other countries that are authoritarian. That's one of the risks".

# AI tutors, doctors and farm experts for all: Vinod Khosla suggests Aadhaar-linked AI public services

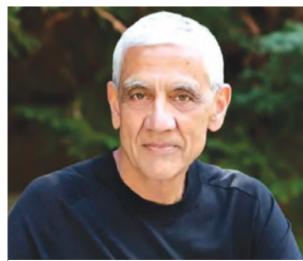
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
New Delhi

Venture capitalist Vinod Khosla on Thursday outlined an ambitious roadmap to provide AI-powered tutors, doctors and agronomy experts to Indians in the next couple of years, proposing that these public services be embedded within the Aadhaar ecosystem.

Speaking at a session of the AI Impact Summit in the national capital, Khosla, Founder of Khosla Ventures, proposed the creation of a non-profit company to build and operate these AI systems before transferring them into the Aadhaar ecosystem, alongside a Unified Payments Interface (UPI)-like service layer.

"Aadhaar allowed us to offer UPI. There's no reason we can't offer, on the same identity-based system where the hard work has already been done, within a year or two to every Indian, these services," he said.

Khosla emphasised that the country must focus on applications that directly benefit "the bottom half of the population," arguing that only then would AI deliver transformative national impact. "I am going to talk to you about some applications of AI that should be



Venture capitalist Vinod Khosla

done immediately. What can be done today, in the next year or two, to reach a billion and a half people in this country with really impactful, immediate benefits," he asserted.

Making a presentation, Khosla began with education, observing that AI-based personal tutors are not futuristic concepts but already in use by millions of students.

"The AI tutors I'm talking about are far superior to human tutors," he asserted, explaining that they can dynamically identify what a student does not know and customise lessons accordingly. Khosla added that such AI systems could dramatically enhance the utility of the Government's DIKSHA

platform by organising and personalising its vast content library.

Turning to healthcare, he proposed AI-driven primary care systems available round the clock to every Indian at "almost trivial or no cost."

He said such systems could provide full primary care expertise, chronic disease management, mental health therapy, physical therapy, and nutrition coaching — areas where demand in India is rising sharply.

"These will make available 24/7 to every Indian full primary care expertise," he said, arguing that AI could multiply India's limited doctor resources.

The third pillar of his proposal focused on agriculture, where he called for providing every farmer, including those with small landholdings, access to a "PhD-level agronomist" via AI, available round-the-clock.

"Today, these massive impact services that could be done with hundreds of millions of dollars can be done very, very cheaply, scale medicine, scale teaching, scale education, scale agronomy, and these services impact the bottom half of the population more, and they need it more than almost anybody else. That's exciting. If we don't do that, it is a massive opportunity loss for us," he said.

# AI to profoundly transform global economy: Mistral AI CEO

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
New Delhi

Artificial intelligence will profoundly transform the global economy and world equilibrium in the coming years, but excessive leverage must be banned for stability, Mistral AI CEO and Co-founder Arthur Mensch said on Thursday.

"AI is going to change pretty profoundly the way economy is being run in next few years...The equilibrium in the world. And in order for the equilibrium to remain sustainable and stable, we need to have to ban excessive leverage, and India is a leader in betting on self-reliance, which is absolutely critical for a country of this size," he said.

Mensch highlighted India's "extremely large" opportunity in artificial intelligence, driven by its vast talent pool, cultural diversity, ambition, and massive market size.

"We believe that India opportunity is extremely large in its talent. A quarter of our researchers are actually Indians. Its diversity of culture and its ambition, and the size of the market

and the size of its industry is giving it immense leverage when it comes to building artificial intelligence that will be differentiated," Mensch said during the AI Impact Summit here.

By controlling its own AI, India can emerge as a "global hub for innovation" and "lead the way for the entire world," he asserted.



Mistral AI CEO and Co-founder Arthur Mensch

Addressing businesses, Mensch advised that adopting AI "is going to take some time, but it's going to bring immense leverage".

"You have unique assets in your companies. You have IP, you have knowledge, you have folklore knowledge, the way you're processing... The way you're operating your business is different

from the way your competitors are operating it," he noted. He also stressed that AI is not about replacing humans; it's about giving them a way to delegate many of their tasks.

"It's about enhancing what serves them, and it's about solving real problems. So at this time, we work with public services. We work with healthcare. We work on making sure that citizens can access information in an easier way, in a faster way. We work on making sure that unemployed people...Are able to find a job faster..." he explained.

AI should be a tool that empowers people, businesses and ensures that Governments can improve the quality of their services and the lives of the citizens.

However, it only works if everybody can access it and if everybody understands how to use it.

"That's why multilingual AI is actually a very strong necessity. That's also why we need to focus on training people and on bringing them the technology at an affordable price," he explained.

# Meta's Wang bats for bold strategies to unlock AI's potential

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
New Delhi

Realising AI's full promise hinges on getting policies right as well as investment, Meta's Chief AI Officer Alexandr Wang said on Thursday as he called for bold national strategies and deep public-private collaboration to unlock its full potential.

Addressing the AI Impact Summit in the national capital, Wang underscored the need for the Government and industry to work together to deliver the four building blocks of artificial intelligence — talent, energy, data and compute — and to design and deploy AI that works for citizens and economies.

He batted for policies that encourage innovation, "not patchworks of inconsistent regulations that make it harder".

"I don't want these amazing technologies to be one-size-fits-all. I want them to serve your needs, designed for the challenges and opportunities that are unique to India, to societies across the Global South and all over the world," Wang said.

AI must work for individuals regardless of geography, language or culture, he said.

"That's only going to be possible if the public and private sectors are on the same side. We need to be partners, working together in this period of openness and collaboration with a sense of shared ambition," he said.

Outlining Meta's long-term vision, Wang described the concept of "personal super intelligence" — AI systems deeply person-



Meta's Chief AI Officer Alexandr Wang

alised for individual users. "Our vision is personal super intelligence, AI that knows you, your goals, your interests, and helps you with whatever you're focused on doing," he said.

Wang painted a picture of AI assistants that can help individuals manage busy lives by creating customized health plans covering diet, exercise and sleep, tracking progress on personal or professional projects, coordinating events, arranging invitations, and offering timely reminders.

Such systems, he said, could also enable users to pursue hobbies like fishing or painting, plan travel, and become more engaged members of their communities by freeing up time and mental bandwidth.

# Nandan Nilekani flags AI backlash risk

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
New Delhi

Infosys Chairman Nandan Nilekani on Thursday said the rapid advancement of artificial intelligence could trigger a backlash unless its benefits are widely diffused and demonstrably useful to society, and the resentment among white-collar workers could potentially derail the technology's progress.

At a fireside chat with Anthropic CEO Dario Amodoi at the AI Impact Summit 2026, the Infosys co-founder said there is currently both a "race to the top" and a "race to the bottom" in AI development, with the latter moving faster and stressing that stakeholders must accelerate efforts to ensure AI is applied for meaningful public good.

"I think all of us who have a stake in AI being useful to humanity have to accelerate and redouble our efforts to make the diffusion happen. Otherwise, the consequences are going to be very, very difficult, because there's going to be a backlash," Nilekani said.

He noted that AI's most visible outcomes, like creating deep fakes, raising the price of your power bill, or similar other things that are happening, could turn public sentiment against it.

"The resentment of the blue-collar worker led to the train wreck of globalisation. The resentment of the white-collar worker is going to lead to the train wreck of AI. So, I think we really have to work very hard to show profound, useful cases of AI," Nilekani said.

He said that helping technology reach a billion people is a different game, and India has experience in implementing Aadhaar, UPI and implementing the largest financial inclusion system.

"We learned that diffusion is a technique. It's both an art and a science. It involves institutions, it involves policymaking, negotiations, dealing with incumbents, dealing with newcomers, and strategies for execution. So

the whole trust buildings, the whole host of things.

"I think if all the investments in AI are going to deliver the value to society, not just to individuals, we'll have to look at diffusion pathways, to take this to everyone. And I think India will lead on that. That's why I have always been saying that India should focus on becoming the use case capital of the world," Nilekani said.

Asked what needs to be done to achieve the expected economic acceleration due to AI usage, Nilekani said the focus has to be on inclusion; this AI has to carry



Infosys Chairman Nandan Nilekani

everybody. "Everybody must feel it. Everybody must benefit from it. And that's why I think the language is very important.

We want people to be able to speak to the computer in their language, in their dialect, mixing English, Hindi, and Tamil. And then I think of making agents work for people. I think if you can make agents work for people, then it means more inclusion," Nilekani said.

Amodoi, in his comments, had said the benefits of AI in the Global South are more pronounced than anywhere else in the world, emphasising that India's considerable technical expertise and eagerness to adopt AI present significant economic growth potential.

Amodoi said that while AI adoption has the potential to boost growth, we need to make sure that AI systems are safe and predictable and autonomously behave in a way that's under human control.

# India must move from services-led nation to IP-led nation: Roshni Nadar

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
New Delhi

India's technology sector must transition from scale-driven growth to an AI-focused, intelligence-led, and Intellectual Property (IP)-driven model, said Roshni Nadar Malhotra, the chairperson of HCL Technologies, on Thursday.

"India must move from being a tech services-led nation to an IP-led nation; services scale with effort. IP scales infinitely," she said while speaking at the AI Impact Summit 2026.

She said that future belongs not to those who merely deploy technology, but to those who build, own and shape platforms, models and products.

"In the AI economy, value accrues to those who build and own platforms, models and products, not just those who deploy them. That shift is not only economic, it is transformative," she added.

Malhotra, who consistently features on the Forbes World's 100 Most Powerful Women list, said that AI carries a dual impact — it reduces costs through automation while expanding new markets and opportunities.

For India to lead in the AI economy, three strategic shifts are essential: from scale to IP creation, from adopting to building, and from fragmented efforts to a national AI infrastructure that democratises compute and innovation, she added.



Chairperson of HCL Technologies Roshni Nadar Malhotra

"Compute can unlock innovation across startups, universities, enterprises and institutions. When compute is accessible, innovation decentralizes. When innovation decentralizes, IP multi-

plies. That is how an IP nation is built — not by one champion, but by an ecosystem but ambition without purpose is incomplete," she said.

According to her, artificial intelligence is not just a technological shift but a leadership moment. Every revolution raises a human question and AI asks what should be delegated, forcing us to redefine what is uniquely human.

As AI takes over writing, calculating, diagnosing and predicting, leadership must move beyond knowing to deciding. Malhotra said that HCL Tech is repositioning itself from a people-centric delivery model to an integrated system of software, intelligent agents and human expertise.

This transformation reflects a broader national ambition — to evolve from a services-led nation to an IP-led nation.

"We are evolving from a people-centric delivery model to an integrated system of software products, intelligent agents and human expertise, delivering outcomes at scale. This is more than just a business shift. It reflects a broader national ambition to build intellectual property that creates enduring, compounding value," the chairperson said.

AI must be governed responsibly, as speed without control and scale without trust are unsustainable, she said.

Elaborating, she cited an example from the T20 cricket match, saying like a power hitter in shorter format of the game, AI is changing the game but success depends on how intelligently we set the field.

to build out talent are already in place.

Stating that people are giving opportunities as apprenticeships to get exposure to real-world applications, he said, "This capability is reinforced by a vibrant innovation ecosystem. India is home, as many of us know, to the world's third-largest technology startup base, including more than 4,000 startups in the deep tech and AI space."

India's advantage will come from developing talent at scale, not just people trained on AI, but people who can apply it with context, judgement and an ability to adapt to change, he added.

Citing India's strengths why it is well-placed today to take advantage of AI, Premji cited the example of the success of UPI payments which has been adopted at mass scale. "India also has one of the largest and fastest-growing pools of AI talent in the world. We

are truly the AI and talent destination of the world. Approximately 6.5 lakh professionals in India work in AI-related roles today, and this number will double by 2027," he noted. Citing Government initiatives to train 10 million young people in AI, along with industry partnerships with universities which are expanding access to practical, job-ready training, he said many of the foundations

are truly the AI and talent destination of the world. Approximately 6.5 lakh professionals in India work in AI-related roles today, and this number will double by 2027," he noted. Citing Government initiatives to train 10 million young people in AI, along with industry partnerships with universities which are expanding access to practical, job-ready training, he said many of the foundations

are truly the AI and talent destination of the world. Approximately 6.5 lakh professionals in India work in AI-related roles today, and this number will double by 2027," he noted. Citing Government initiatives to train 10 million young people in AI, along with industry partnerships with universities which are expanding access to practical, job-ready training, he said many of the foundations

are truly the AI and talent destination of the world. Approximately 6.5 lakh professionals in India work in AI-related roles today, and this number will double by 2027," he noted. Citing Government initiatives to train 10 million young people in AI, along with industry partnerships with universities which are expanding access to practical, job-ready training, he said many of the foundations

are truly the AI and talent destination of the world. Approximately 6.5 lakh professionals in India work in AI-related roles today, and this number will double by 2027," he noted. Citing Government initiatives to train 10 million young people in AI, along with industry partnerships with universities which are expanding access to practical, job-ready training, he said many of the foundations

are truly the AI and talent destination of the world. Approximately 6.5 lakh professionals in India work in AI-related roles today, and this number will double by 2027," he noted. Citing Government initiatives to train 10 million young people in AI, along with industry partnerships with universities which are expanding access to practical, job-ready training, he said many of the foundations

are truly the AI and talent destination of the world. Approximately 6.5 lakh professionals in India work in AI-related roles today, and this number will double by 2027," he noted. Citing Government initiatives to train 10 million young people in AI, along with industry partnerships with universities which are expanding access to practical, job-ready training, he said many of the foundations

are truly the AI and talent destination of the world. Approximately 6.5 lakh professionals in India work in AI-related roles today, and this number will double by 2027," he noted. Citing Government initiatives to train 10 million young people in AI, along with industry partnerships with universities which are expanding access to practical, job-ready training, he said many of the foundations

are truly the AI and talent destination of the world. Approximately 6.5 lakh professionals in India work in AI-related roles today, and this number will double by 2027," he noted. Citing Government initiatives to train 10 million young people in AI, along with industry partnerships with universities which are expanding access to practical, job-ready training, he said many of the foundations

are truly the AI and talent destination of the world. Approximately 6.5 lakh professionals in India work in AI-related roles today, and this number will double by 2027," he noted. Citing Government initiatives to train 10 million young people in AI, along with industry partnerships with universities which are expanding access to practical, job-ready training, he said many of the foundations

are truly the AI and talent destination of the world. Approximately 6.5 lakh professionals in India work in AI-related roles today, and this number will double by 2027," he noted. Citing Government initiatives to train 10 million young people in AI, along with industry partnerships with universities which are expanding access to practical, job-ready training, he said many of the foundations

are truly the AI and talent destination of the world. Approximately 6.5 lakh professionals in India work in AI-related roles today, and this number will double by 2027," he noted. Citing Government initiatives to train 10 million young people in AI, along with industry partnerships with universities which are expanding access to practical, job-ready training, he said many of the foundations

are truly the AI and talent destination of the world. Approximately 6.5 lakh professionals in India work in AI-related roles today, and this number will double by 2027," he noted. Citing Government initiatives to train 10 million young people in AI, along with industry partnerships with universities which are expanding access to practical, job-ready training, he said many of the foundations

are truly the AI and talent destination of the world. Approximately 6.5 lakh professionals in India work in AI-related roles today, and this number will double by 2027," he noted. Citing Government initiatives to train 10 million young people in AI, along with industry partnerships with universities which are expanding access to practical, job-ready training, he said many of the foundations

are truly the AI and talent destination of the world. Approximately 6.5 lakh professionals in India work in AI-related roles today, and this number will double by 2027," he noted. Citing Government initiatives to train 10 million young people in AI, along with industry partnerships with universities which are expanding access to practical, job-ready training, he said many of the foundations

# India can be one of world's most consequential AI environments: Wipro's Rishad Premji

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
New Delhi

India has the opportunity to become one of the world's most consequential environments for AI application but the country's advantage will be defined by the choices it makes regarding where to apply, diffuse and responsibly deploy the new wave of technology to translate capability into real impact, Wipro Ltd Executive Chairman, Rishad Premji said on Thursday. AI is once in a generation technology that emerges which doesn't just change "what we do, it truly changes what we must do", he said while speaking at the AI Impact Summit.

"How we as a country, how India responds in the next few years, will shape not just our own economic trajectory, but our

ability to solve problems that matter to over a billion people," Premji asserted.

Stating that the conversation on AI has fundamentally shifted from possibility to practicality, from experimentation to adoption, and from pilots to scale impact, he said this shift matters tremendously, because technology creates value only when it is applied to solve real-world problems, responsibly and at scale.

"It means India has the opportunity to become one of the world's most consequential environments for the application of AI, not just as a builder of the technology, but as a place where AI is tested against real-world complexity and made to work at scale," Premji asserted.

As we look ahead, he said, "India's advantage in AI will not be

defined only by the size of our models or the scale of our infrastructure. It will be defined by the choices we make, about where we apply AI, how we diffuse it, how responsibly it is deployed and whether we can translate capability into real impact for Governments, citizens and enterprises."

India's advantage will come from developing talent at scale, not just people trained on AI, but people who can apply it with context, judgement and an ability to adapt to change, he added.

Citing India's strengths why it is well-placed today to take advantage of AI, Premji cited the example of the success of UPI payments which has been adopted at mass scale. "India also has one of the largest and fastest-growing pools of AI talent in the world. We

are truly the AI and talent destination of the world. Approximately 6.5 lakh professionals in India work in AI-related roles today, and this number will double by 2027," he noted. Citing Government initiatives to train 10 million young people in AI, along with industry partnerships with universities which are expanding access to practical, job-ready training, he said many of the foundations

are truly the AI and talent destination of the world. Approximately 6.5 lakh professionals in India work in AI-related roles today, and this number will double by 2027," he noted. Citing Government initiatives to train 10 million young people in AI, along with industry partnerships with universities which are expanding access to practical, job-ready training, he said many of the foundations



Wipro Executive Chairman Rishad Premji

to build out talent are already in place.

Stating that people are giving opportunities as apprenticeships to get exposure to real-world applications, he said, "This capability is reinforced by a vibrant innovation ecosystem. India is home, as many of us know, to the world's third-largest technology startup base, including more than 4,000 startups in the deep tech and AI space."

India's advantage will come from developing talent at scale, not just people trained on AI, but people who can apply it with context, judgement and an ability to adapt to change, Premji noted. "That is why AI fluency must extend beyond engineers, to teachers, to nurses, to administrators, to supervisors, to small business owners, among everyone

else. The dividing line will not be human versus machine, it will truly be between those who adapt and those who hesitate to adapt," he added.

Noting that technology shifts inevitably create uncertainty, but for countries that act decisively, they also create opportunity, he said, "India has embraced such shifts in the past and I believe we are really well positioned to do so again."

Citing the example of pioneering work done by Azeem Premji Foundation on early detection of tuberculosis using AI in a rural community in Tamil Nadu, he said it enabled early screening and faster referral, without requiring patients to travel.

"If successful, this approach can help detect TB earlier and extend the reach of healthcare into com-

munities that need it most," Premji said, it can help the country overcome the challenges of shortages of doctors in India, which has a national doctor-to-population ratio of roughly 1:800

"AI does not replace care, it multiplies scarce expertise infinitely. The same last-mile challenges exist across other countries, in continents of Asia, Africa and Latin America, home to more than 4 billion people," he added.

Solutions that work here, in India, at scale, low-cost, multilingual and resilient, can travel far beyond its own borders, Premji said, adding "If we can do that, India's contribution can be vast, not just in building AI, but in applying it to solve problems for enterprises, for our own country and for the world at large, thoughtfully, inclusively and with impact, at scale."



## India's sovereign AI vision and its strategic relevance for the global south



**ANIL KUMAR RAI**

facilitate service delivery, and productivity gains through aligning the model designs with real-world use cases such as agriculture advisories, welfare targeting, health diagnostics, and education delivery. This idea is reinforced by investments such as the 10,000-GPU national compute grid and initiatives like BharatGen, which would help democratise access to AI resources for startups, researchers, and public institutions. The underlying principle is "diffusion first": AI must be widely deployed and locally usable, rather than remaining confined to elite research labs or corporate silos.

By reducing training costs, optimising inference efficiency, and emphasising return on investment, India offers a credible alternative to capital-intensive AI models that are inaccessible to most developing countries. This approach has already yielded measurable outcomes. According to global benchmarks, India ranks among the top 3 countries in AI talent availability and preparedness. More importantly, it has demonstrated the ability to deploy AI at population scale enabling India to function as a systems integrator, capable of aligning AI with governance structures and developmental priorities.

The political framing of India's AI model was articulated forcefully by senior leadership during global engagements. The message was unambiguous: India does not see itself as a follower in the AI race, but as a producer, tester, and One of the most consequential pillars of India's AI ecosystem is its work on language technologies. With 22 official languages and hundreds of dialects, India deals with a huge linguistic diversity. The Bhashini initiative, launched under the National Language Translation Mission, addresses this challenge by providing open, interoperable AI services for speech, translation, and voice interfaces. Bhashini operates as a public digital good.

Its open APIs enable Governments, startups, and civil society actors to build services in local languages at affordable costs. The platform relies on



Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressing the gathering during the India AI Impact Summit 2026 in New Delhi

participatory data creation through initiatives such as crowdsourced language contributions, ensuring that AI systems reflect local idioms and cultural nuance rather than imported linguistic norms. This linguistic capability is not merely technical; it is political. Language access determines who can participate in the digital economy, access public services, and exercise civic rights. By embedding linguistic inclusion into its AI stack, India advances the idea of digital citizenship as a universal entitlement.

### Strategic convergence with Africa

India's AI experience holds particular relevance for Africa, a continent defined by demographic dividend, linguistic diversity, and developmental urgency. With over 2,000 languages and a rapidly growing youth population, Africa faces challenges strikingly similar to those India has navigated over the past two decades. The Indian AI model therefore offers a natural foundation for South-South cooperation.

Low-resource language training techniques developed for lesser spoken and geographically concentrated Indian languages can be directly adapted to African contexts, enabling local

languages to become functional interfaces for governance, education, and commerce. This alignment supports the objectives of Agenda 2063 and its Second Ten-Year Implementation Plan (2024-2033), which identify digital transformation and AI as strategic enablers of inclusive growth.

Beyond language, India's DPI-driven AI solutions provide ready-to-deploy templates for health systems, financial inclusion, agricultural extension, and logistics optimisation. Rather than importing proprietary platforms, African countries can co-develop sovereign AI capabilities that retain control over data while benefiting from shared architectures and open standards.

### AI as an economic multiplier under South-South cooperation

The economic implications of this partnership are substantial. AI adoption has the potential to significantly boost productivity, reduce transaction costs, and integrate fragmented markets. Applied strategically, AI can help operationalise the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and Regional Customs Unions like East African Community (EAC), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and South African

### DISTINCT FEATURES OF INDIA LED INITIATIVES IN AI

The India-led AI Impact Summit reframed AI as a developmental and geopolitical instrument rather than a purely commercial technology.

India's Sovereign AI model emphasizes autonomy, frugality, and population-scale deployment through a five-layer architecture. Its distinct features are medium-scale, task-specific AI models which offer high impact without the costs and dependencies on trillion-parameter systems. Language platforms such as Bhashini embed linguistic inclusion into AI, enabling digital participation across diverse societies.

India's AI experience aligns closely with Africa's development priorities under Agenda 2063 and its Second Ten-Year Plan. India is positioning AI as a multiplier for growth, trade integration, SME financing, and youth employment through skill upgrading.

Through this initiative India is open to strengthen South-South Cooperation capable to addressing the needs of African nations by creating customized template for equitable, sovereign, and human-centric Africa led technology governance.

Customs Union (SACU) by streamlining customs procedures, optimising supply chains, and reducing logistics inefficiencies.

India's experience in fintech-enabled credit assessment, for example, illustrates how AI can unlock financing for small and medium enterprises the backbone of African economies. Similarly, AI-driven manufacturing optimization can support Africa's transition from raw material exports to higher-value industrial activities, reinforcing economic resilience.

A persistent concern surrounding AI is its impact on employment. India's model offers a counter-narrative. Rather than emphasising labor replacement, it prioritises skill upgrading and augmentation. AI tools are deployed to enhance worker productivity, support

decision-making, and expand service coverage. For Africa, where millions of young people enter the job market annually, this distinction is critical. AI-enabled vocational training delivered in local languages can accelerate skill acquisition and align workforce capabilities with emerging sectors such as digital services, green manufacturing, and logistics. In this framework, AI becomes an enabler of decent employment rather than a source of displacement.

### A New Template for Global Technology Governance

The broader significance of the AI Impact Summit lies in its contribution to global AI governance. By foregrounding impact, accessibility, and safety, India has galvanised a collective conversation among developing countries about data sovereignty, algorithmic bias, and ethical deployment. The strong participation of Governments, multilateral institutions, and industry leaders' signals growing momentum for a more inclusive techno-legal framework.

To sum up; India-led AI Impact Summit marks a pivotal moment in the evolution of global AI. By advancing a sovereign, frugal, and inclusive model, India has expanded the realm of possibility for the Global South. Its AI stack demonstrates that technological leadership need not be synonymous with exclusion, and that innovation can be aligned with equity, autonomy, and shared prosperity.

The deepening convergence between India and Africa illustrates how South-South cooperation can shape the next phase of the digital revolution. As AI continues to redefine economies and societies, the principles articulated through this partnership; openness, sovereignty, and human-centric design, may well determine whether AI becomes a bridge to collective advancement or a barrier reinforcing old divides.

The Author is Ambassador of India to Ethiopia and Permanent Representative to the African Union

## Adani: India must build own AI infrastructure

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
New Delhi

India must architect its own Artificial Intelligence (AI) infrastructure rather than rely on imports, Adani Group executive director Jeet Adani said on Thursday, warning that AI will redefine national sovereignty.

Outlining a vision for India's 'Intelligence Century', the youngest son of business tycoon Gautam Adani emphasised three pillars of sovereignty — energy, compute and cloud, and services — as central to India's AI strategy.

India must also secure sovereignty across energy, compute and cloud, and services to safeguard its AI future, Jeet Adani said, speaking at India AI Impact Summit here. "AI is written in code. But it runs on electricity... Energy security is intelligence security. And sustainable energy becomes a competitive advantage," he said, outlining plans to integrate renewable energy clusters with AI data centres and industrial corridors.

On computing infrastructure, he added, "Cloud sovereignty does not mean isolation. It means autonomy... India must host critical AI workloads domestically... Domestic access to high-performance compute for our startups, academia, defence, healthcare, and manufacturing."



Adani Digital Labs Director Jeet Adani speaking during the India AI Impact Summit 2026 in New Delhi

Adani stressed that AI should first serve Indian citizens, boosting agriculture, education, healthcare, manufacturing, logistics, and financial inclusion.

He cited the Adani Group's \$100-billion commitment to a sovereign, green-energy-powered AI platform, calling it "the trigger for a 5-gigawatt, \$250 billion integrated energy-and-compute ecosystem engineered to anchor India's Intelligence Revolution."

"The question is no longer whether India will participate in the AI century. The question is whether the AI century will carry India's imprint in its infrastructure, in her intelligence, in her standards, and most importantly — in her values. I believe — deeply and without hesitation — that she will," he said. "Just as electricity-powered industry reshaped geopolitics, internet transformed commerce, artificial intelligence will redefine sovereignty."

The central question before the country is not whether to adopt AI, it is, will India import intelligence — or architect it? Will it consume productivity — or create it? Will it plug into someone else's system — or build the system? The time for asking is now over, he said.

Detailing his sovereignty pillars, Adani said AI performance depends on energy security, warning, "Under peak load, advanced processors generate extraordinary heat. Systems throttle when power falters. Performance drops. This is not just an engineering detail. It is a strategic truth. If a nation's energy systems are fragile, its intelligence systems are fragile."

And so India's renewable expansion — solar, wind, storage — is no longer just climate policy. It is strategic infrastructure policy. Renewable clusters will collocate with AI data centres, and industrial corridors will integrate energy and compute planning.

## Govt working to upskill, reskill IT talent amid AI challenges: Vaishnav

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
New Delhi

The Government is aware of the challenges that the Indian IT industry is facing due to artificial intelligence and is working with academia to upskill and reskill talents, Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnav said on Thursday.

During his welcome address at the inaugural session of India AI Impact Summit 2026, Vaishnav said that the Prime Minister, in the Union Budget,



Union Minister of Information Technology Ashwini Vaishnav

has announced a very big policy shift aimed at attracting world's data to India, to reside in India, to be processed here and to deliver high-value services to the world.

"We are also conscious of the challenges which are facing our IT industry and to mitigate it we are working with the industry and academia to upskill, reskill and to build a new talent pipeline for this new intelligence age," Vaishnav said. He said the Prime Minister

has always shown commitment towards clean energy, and India at present has more than 50 per cent of the power generation capacity from the clean sources.

"Our visionary Prime Minister has recently reformed the nuclear energy sector also, which is another very good sector for providing that base load of clean energy. We have a robust grid which has been practically rebuilt over the last one decade," Vaishnav said.

## AI implications in India to be greater than other countries: Narayan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
New Delhi

The implications of AI in India will be more significant than anywhere in the world over the next few years, given its large population, and the country can play a global leadership role in data, privacy and security, Adobe Chairman and CEO Shantanu Narayan said on Thursday.

India is better positioned than most other countries when it comes to democratising AI and making it available for the masses compared to other countries, Narayan said here at the AI Impact Summit.

"...In terms of the implications, the one is, given the number of people who use AI in India will be greater than anywhere in the world over a few years," he said. Narayan further said the



Bharti Enterprises Founder and Chairman Sunil Bharti Mittal with Adobe Chairman and CEO Shantanu Narayan during the India AI Impact Summit 2026 in New Delhi

leadership that India can play is not just in what these models mean, but also in

"how do you think about data? How do you think about privacy, security and trust?"

Highlighting the area of "content authenticity", he

said this is an "incredible opportunity for India, where, as a company, we are incredibly honoured to participate with it".

On the issue of making AI democratic, making it available to all for the benefit of humanity and not letting it be controlled by a few big companies, Narayan said there will be inevitable challenges between commercial enterprises that want to keep information proprietary and how they advance it to do good for humanity, but India is better positioned in that aspect.

"I'm actually confident, now I do think India is better positioned than most other countries...I'm less confident about what will happen in those countries. I'm a lot more confident about what will happen in India," Narayan asserted.

## India can lead global innovation in AI, energy intelligence: Schneider Electric CEO

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
New Delhi

India is entering a new phase where it can lead global innovation, especially in Artificial Intelligence (AI) and energy intelligence, Olivier Blum, chief executive officer of Schneider Electric, said on Thursday.

With strong support from the Government and industry, India has the potential to be at the centre of the next technological transformation, he said while speaking at the AI Impact Summit.

As he puts it, "If you can crack the code in India, you



Olivier Blum, chief executive officer of Schneider Electric

can succeed anywhere in the world". The country offers a combination of cost efficiency, innovation and engineering talent, making it a key hub for the global AI revolution, the CEO said. "We are starting a new phase of the planet, a

new technology revolution, which is called AI, where India can be the place where a lot of innovation starts with. I think we are at the point of time, where India can innovate the next technology that will make the world more efficient," he said.

With strong capabilities in power, automation, and digital technologies, the country has the ingredients to solve complex global challenges, Blum said.

"The level of innovation I know in India, some people also say 'jugaad' in India. But the level of creativity that you can have in India, yet new

system that will solve the most complex problem of the planet can be done in this country. And when you look at the number of engineers you have in power, automation, digital, you have all the ingredients which are together at a point in time where we need to make AI, a big transformation for the planet," he said.

For Schneider Electric, India is not just another market; it is the third-largest globally, the largest in terms of employees (40,000) and home to its biggest R&D centre with 8,000 engineers, he added.

## India doing great job of embedding AI in education, says Accenture CEO

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
New Delhi

India is doing a great job of embedding AI into the educational system, starting in primary school, and Governments across the world will need to do so, Accenture CEO Julie Sweet said on Thursday.

Speaking at the AI Impact Summit, she highlighted India's importance in an AI-enabled future.

Sweet said Accenture employs over 3.5 lakh people in India and has one of the largest AI workforces globally, integrated with its hubs in the US, Europe, the Middle East and Japan.

"...Education is no longer a destination. We have to have lifelong learning. India's doing a great job of embedding AI into the educational system, starting



Accenture CEO Julie Sweet

in primary school, and Governments across the world will need to do so," Sweet said.

At the same time, as countries are thinking differently, individuals have to think differently, and recognise that formal education is no longer the

destination, she added. Sweet emphasised that countries and companies that embrace new technologies prosper.

"When companies and countries embrace new technologies and then use them to drive growth and productivity, they prosper," she said.

Referring to the adoption of robotic process automation and digital technologies over the past decade, she said the IT services industry created more jobs even as automation advanced.

Sweet further stressed that companies must commit to sustaining entry-level jobs despite AI-driven changes. "Entry-level jobs make economic sense. They're the only way to create future leaders. And they bring needed, truly AI-needed talent to each of our organisations," Sweet said.

## FROM THE WORLD

### PERU

#### Jose Balcasar elected President

Peru's Congress elected legislator Jose Maria Balcasar as the country's eighth president in a decade. Balcasar, an 83-year-old former judge representing the leftist Peru Libre party, defeated three other candidates with a majority of the 130-member legislature. The revolving-door presidency in Peru reflects a political crisis fuelled by a lack of legislative majorities for leaders. Lawmakers have frequently used a broad interpretation of a constitutional article regarding "permanent moral incapacity" to remove sitting presidents.

### SOUTH AFRICA

#### Bus crash leaves 4 dead

A bus crash in South Africa's Limpopo province on Thursday has left at least four people dead and 31 injured, authorities said. The bus was travelling from the Gauteng province in South Africa to Zimbabwe when it lost control and swerved into a ditch on the N1 highway close to the border with Zimbabwe, according to the provincial minister for transport, Violet Mathye. "So far we have confirmation of four fatalities. We will give other numbers as we get them," Mathye told public broadcaster SABC. The bus was still trapped in the ditch with passengers inside. The Limpopo transport department said in a statement that the cause of the accident was initially unknown.

## Ex-South Korean President gets life sentence for martial law

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
Seoul

Former South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol was sentenced to life in prison for his brief imposition of martial law in a dramatic culmination to the country's biggest political crisis in decades. Yoon was ousted from office after a baffling attempt to overcome an opposition-controlled legislature by declaring martial law and sending troops to surround the National Assembly on December 3, 2024.

Judge Jee Kui-youn of the Seoul Central District Court said he found Yoon guilty of rebellion for mobilizing military and police forces in an illegal attempt to seize the liberal-led Assembly, arrest politicians and establish unchecked power for a "considerable" time.

Yoon's martial law imposition, the first of its kind in more than four decades, harked back to South Korea's past military-backed Government's when authorities occasionally proclaimed emergency decrees that allowed them to station soldiers, tanks and armoured vehicles on streets or at public places such as schools to prevent anti-Government demonstrations.

As lawmakers rushed to the National Assembly, Yoon's martial law command issued a proclamation declaring sweeping powers, including suspending political activities, controlling the media and publications, and allowing arrests without warrants.

The decree lasted about six hours before being lifted after a quorum of lawmakers managed to break through a military blockade and unanimously voted to lift the measure. Yoon was suspended from office on December 14, 2024, after being impeached by lawmakers and was for-



Supporters of former South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol stage a rally outside of Seoul Central District Court in Seoul, South Korea

mally removed by the Constitutional Court in April 2025. He has been under arrest since last July while facing multiple criminal trials, with the rebellion charge carrying the most severe punishment.

Yoon Kave-keun, one of the former president's lawyers, accused Jee of issuing a "pre-determined verdict" based solely on prosecutors' arguments and said the "rule of law" had collapsed. He said he would discuss whether to appeal with his client and the rest of the legal team. Yoon Suk Yeol told the court the martial law decree was only meant to raise public awareness of how the liberals were paralysing state affairs, and that he was prepared to respect lawmakers if they voted against the measure.

Prosecutors said it was clear Yoon was attempting to disable the legislature and prevent lawmakers from lifting the measure through voting, actions that exceeded his constitutional authority even under martial law.

In announcing Yoon and Kim's verdicts, Jee said the decision to send troops to the National Assembly was key to his determination that the imposition of martial law amounted to rebellion.

"This court finds that the purpose of (Yoon's) actions was to send troops to the National Assembly, block the Assembly building and arrest key figures, including the National Assembly speaker and the leaders of both the ruling and opposition parties, in order to prevent lawmakers from gathering to deliberate or vote," Jee said.

"It's sufficiently established that he intended to obstruct or paralyse the Assembly's activities so that it would be unable to properly perform its functions for a considerable period of time."

#### Protesters rally outside court

As Yoon arrived in court, hundreds of police officers watched closely as Yoon supporters rallied outside a judi-

cial complex, their cries rising as the prison bus transporting him drove past. Yoon's critics gathered nearby, demanding the death penalty. There were no immediate reports of major clashes following the verdict.

A special prosecutor had demanded the death penalty for Yoon Suk Yeol, saying his actions posed a threat to the country's democracy and deserved the most serious punishment available, but most analysts expected a life sentence since the poorly-planned power grab did not result in casualties.

South Korea has not executed a death row inmate since 1997, in what is widely seen as a de facto moratorium on capital punishment amid calls for its abolition.

The court also convicted and sentenced several former military and police officials involved in enforcing Yoon's martial law decree, including ex-Defense Minister Kim Yong Hyun, who received a 30-year jail term.

## India and Israel sign another MoU deepening defence ties

HARINDER MISHRA ■ Tel Aviv

Ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Israel later this month, an MoU was signed between India and Israel to deepen defence ties and strengthen ongoing joint activities, including future seminars and cooperative initiatives.

The International Defence Cooperation Directorate (SIBAT) within Israel's Ministry of Defense (IMOD) have facilitated meetings between leading Indian and Israel defence industries leading to the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).



SIBAT in cooperation with the Society of Indian Defence Manufacturers (SIDM) and India's Ministry of Defence led a seminar and B2B meetings this week between leading Indian and Israeli

defence companies, the IMOD said.

"The seminar was led by SIBAT Director, Brig. Gen. (Res.) Yair Kulas, and brought together small, medium and large Israeli and Indian defence companies for substantive engagements, with the goal of deepening familiarity with India's defense industrial ecosystem and its updated Defense Acquisition Procedure (DAP) 2026 - India's national defense procurement policy," a statement from the IMOD said.

"The event featured representatives from 30 Indian and 26 Israeli defence companies," it said. (PTI)

## Bangladesh blocks SpiceJet



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
New Delhi

Bangladesh has banned aviation giant SpiceJet from flying in its airspace as the budget carrier is yet to clear its pending dues. Consequently, with Dhaka's airspace no longer available for the airline, as a result, some of the airline's flights from Kolkata, including those to Guwahati, are now taking longer routes.

Sources indicated that the restriction imposed by Bangladesh is linked to non-payment of dues,

although the exact nature of the outstanding amount could not be immediately confirmed. According to flight tracking data from [Flightradar24.com](http://Flightradar24.com) on Thursday, SpiceJet flights operating between Kolkata and the northeastern cities of Guwahati and Imphal were avoiding Bangladesh airspace and instead taking longer routes. This may increase flying time for passengers on these flights.

A spokesperson for SpiceJet said on Thursday that the airline is in regular talks with the authorities

about operational and procedural matters, including charges for using the airspace. "These are routine industry issues and we are working constructively towards an early resolution. Our flight operations remain unaffected, and we continue to operate our scheduled services in line with regulatory requirements," the spokesperson said. SpiceJet shares were down nearly 1 percent at Rs 16.81 on the BSE during afternoon trading. The airline has also been struggling financially.

### Lost and Found

Police Unit: Bengaluru Rural  
Lost Report No. 1998315/2026 Date: 07/01/2026

Gautam Kumar & Arun Kumar R/o Villa 49 sobha lifestyle legacy, IVC Road, Devanhalli, Bangalore 562110, have lost possession certificate for J802 Vrinda City, Greater Noida, DOCUMENT NO./ IDENTIFICATION: CCSE/VC/09-10/26.

If anybody found please contact at Mobile 9606685454 or write Email: ranigautam.kumar@gmail.com

**AXIS BANK** Retail Lending and Payment Group (Local Office/Branch): Axis Bank Ltd., 1st Floor, G-4/5, B, Sector-4, Gomi Nagar Extension, Lucknow, U.P.-226010 Axis Bank Ltd., 3rd Floor, Gigaplex, NPC-1, TTC Industrial Area, Mughal Road, Atroli, Navi Mumbai-400702. Registered Office: "Trisul", 3rd Floor, Opp. Samartheshwar Temple, Law Garden, Elsidroge Ahmedabad-380006.

**E-AUCTION SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMovable PROPERTY**  
E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8(i) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

<b>RESERVE PRICE (IN RS.)</b>	Rs. 1,42,61,400/- (Rupees One Crore Forty-Two Lakh Sixty-One Thousand Four Hundred Only)
<b>EARNEST MONEY DEPOSIT (IN RS.)</b>	Rs. 14,26,140/- (Rupees Fourteen Lakh Twenty-Six Thousand One Hundred Forty Only) through DD/PO in favor of 'Axis bank Ltd.', payable.
<b>BID INCREMENTAL AMOUNT</b>	Rs. 50,000/- (Rupees Fifteen Thousand Only)
<b>LAST DATE, TIME AND VENUE FOR SUBMISSION OF BIDS / TENDER WITH EMD</b>	Till 24.03.2026 latest by 05:00 P.M. Axis Bank Ltd., 1st Floor, G-4/5, B, Sector-4, Gomi Nagar Extension, Lucknow, U.P.-226010 addressed to Mr. Abhishek Sharma
<b>DATE, TIME, AND VENUE FOR PUBLIC AUCTION</b>	On 25.03.2026, between 11:00 A.M and 12:00 Noon, with unlimited extensions of 5 minutes each at web portal <a href="https://www.bankauctions.com">https://www.bankauctions.com</a> e-auction tender documents containing e-auction bid form, declaration etc., are available in the website of the Service Provider as mentioned above.

**SCHEDULE - DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY**  
All such pieces or parcels of a diversified land/property, residential / commercial Covered Area 95.00 sq.mt. situated at Old No. 109 & 110, New No. 81, Khurja Bulandnagar, Atri Pradesh, 203131, In the Name Of Mr. Sandeep Kumar Mittal. Boundaries - East - Shop Of Jai Prakash, West - Shop Of Nainsukh, North - 25 Feet Wide Road, South - Shop Of Kundan Lal.

**NORTHERN RAILWAY**  
**E-TENDER NOTICE (FOR PUBLICATION)**  
St. DEE-TRS-GZB acting for and on behalf of President of India invites E-Tender against Tender No. 230-TRS-GZB-2024-25-30-RT. The details are as under:

1. Name of the work:	Removal, fitment, maintenance and repairing of Battery box of a diverted land/property, residential / commercial Covered Area 95.00 sq.mt. situated at Old No. 109 & 110, New No. 81, Khurja Bulandnagar, Atri Pradesh, 203131, In the Name Of Mr. Sandeep Kumar Mittal. Boundaries - East - Shop Of Jai Prakash, West - Shop Of Nainsukh, North - 25 Feet Wide Road, South - Shop Of Kundan Lal.
2. Approx. cost of work:	₹45,31,235.50
3. Earnest Money to be deposited:	₹90,600.00
4. Last Date & Time of Submission of tender bid of tender:	20-03-2026 (15:00 Hrs.)
5. Date & Time of opening of tender document:	20-03-2026 (After 15:00 Hrs.)
6. Website particulars where complete details of tender documents can be seen:	<a href="http://www.ireps.gov.in">www.ireps.gov.in</a>

Note: (i) The tenderer/s must be registered on the Indian Railway E-Procurement System (IREPS) site i.e. [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in) for participating in e-tender system. (ii) For all-terms and conditions please refer tender document. (iii) No manual offers are acceptable. (iv) Cost of Tender document and Earnest money will be acceptable through net banking or payment gateway only.

No. 230-TRS-GZB-2024-25-30-RT Dated: 17-02-2026 571/2026  
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

### GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM

#### OFFICE OF THE DIRECTORATE OF MEDICAL EDUCATION, ASSAM

#### SIXMILE, KHANAPARA, GUWAHATI-22

#### REQUEST FOR BIDS

#### INTERNATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING

Directorate of Medical Education, Khanapara Sixmile on behalf of O/O Project Director, Assam Health Infrastructure Development and Management Society (AHIDMS) invites "Request for Bid" from reputed suppliers for supply of the following advance medical equipments funded by Japan International Corporation Agency (JICA) for GMCH, Guwahati in Assam:

1. ERCP with UGI and LGI Endoscopy System- 4 unit
2. Upper GI and Lower GI Endoscopy System- 2 unit
3. Upper GI Endoscopy System- 2 unit
4. E-Bus System - 1 unit

The details may be seen in the Request for Bid document uploaded in the Assam E- procurement portal (<https://assamtenders.gov.in>) & <https://ahidms.assam.gov.in>. The applicant must be registered with the E-Tendering system (ETS) of the Govt. of Assam. (Website: <https://assamtenders.gov.in>). The Project Director, AHIDMS reserves the right to accept or reject all bids without showing any reasons whatsoever.

Sd /-  
Directorate of Medical Education, Assam  
DIPR/C/PIO/901/20-Febr-26

### SUPERIOR FINLEASE LIMITED

CIN: L74899DL1994PLC061995  
Regd. Off: NS-92, Khasra No-33/21, Ranaji Enclave, Najafgarh, Near Arjun Park Bus Stand, New Delhi -110043; Phone No.: +91-9953799335  
Email: [superiorfinlease@gmail.com](mailto:superiorfinlease@gmail.com); Website: <http://www.superiorfinlease.com>;

#### NOTICE

**PUBLIC NOTICE FOR ATTENTION OF EQUITY SHAREHOLDERS OF THE COMPANY IN RESPECT OF INFORMATION REGARDING EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETING TO BE HELD ON WEDNESDAY, THE 18TH DAY OF MARCH, 2026 THROUGH VIDEO CONFERENCING ("VC") OTHER AUDIO-VISUAL MEANS ("OAVM")**

1. Shareholders may note that the Extraordinary General Meeting ("EGM") of the Company will be held through video conferencing ("VC") other Audio-Visual means ("OAVM") on Wednesday, the 18th Day of March, 2026 at 03:30 PM IST in compliance with General Circular numbers 20/2020, 14/2020/17/2020, 09/2024 and all other applicable laws and circular issued by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs and Securities and Exchange Board of India ("SEBI"), to transact the Business that will be set forth in the Notice of Meeting.
2. In Compliance with the above circulars, electronic copies of the Notice of the EGM will be sent to all the shareholders whose email addresses are registered with the Company (Depository Participants). The notice of the EGM will also be made available on the Company's website at <http://www.superiorfinlease.com>, BSE Website <https://www.bseindia.com/> and Metropolitan Stock Exchange of India Limited website <https://www.msx.in/>
3. Manner of registering email addresses:  
1. In case shares are held in physical mode, please send a request to Registrar and Transfer Agents of the Company Le Skyline Financial Services Private Limited ("RTA") at [info@skylinenet.com](mailto:info@skylinenet.com) providing folio No., Name of shareholder, scanned copy of the share certificate (front and back), PAN (self-attested scanned copy of PAN card), Aadhar (self-attested scanned copy of Aadhar Card) for registering e-mail address.  
2. In case shares are held in dematerialized mode, please contact your Depository Participant (DP) and register your email address and bank account details in your Demat account, as per the process advised by your DP.
4. Manner of casting vote through e-voting:  
Shareholders will have an opportunity to cast their vote remotely on the business as set forth in the Notice of the EGM through electronic voting system. The manner of voting remotely for shareholders holding shares in dematerialized mode, physical mode and for shareholders who have not registered their email addresses will be provided in the notice to the shareholders which will also be made available on the website of the Company.
5. The Notice of the EGM must be sent to the shareholders in accordance with the applicable laws on their registered email address in due course.

For Superior Finlease Limited  
Rajneesh Kumar  
(Director)  
DIN: 02463693  
Date: 19.02.2026  
Place: New Delhi

**Public Notice**  
This is to inform the general public that Mr. Shubham Dhanraj, Mr. Tanmanjita Gaiti, Mr. Gaurav Gaiti and Mr. Anil Solanki are the Owners of Plot No. 100 and 101, land area measuring 200 sq. yards, out of Khasra No. 100/1, and 101/1, Situated at Village Himmatpur, Pargana Banta, Tehsil Chandpur, District Bijnor, U.P. through gift deed dated 14-10-2018 doc. No. 15530 executed by Mr. Shubham Dhanraj, Mr. Tanmanjita Gaiti, Mr. Gaurav Gaiti and Mr. Anil Solanki in favour of Mr. Shubham Dhanraj, Mr. Tanmanjita Gaiti, Mr. Gaurav Gaiti and Mr. Anil Solanki. The said property is being mortgaged to the said property by way of Sale Deed to Mr. Shivam, Subsequently, Mr. Shivam is in the process of mortgaging the said property with ICICI Home Finance Co. Ltd. Any objections or concerns regarding this transaction should be raised within a period of 07 days from the date of this public notice. Any objections submitted after the completion of this 07-day period will not be considered binding with respect to the said property or the interests of our client. If anyone wishes to raise an objection, please do so within the stipulated 07-day period by contacting Law Veritas: North (Advocates & Legal Consultants) at Office No. 11, 1st Floor, Building No. A-44/A, Sector-16, Noida, Uttar Pradesh-201301, Landline: +91012-04199711, e-mail: [accounts@lvnorth.in](mailto:accounts@lvnorth.in)

**Public Notice**  
This is to inform the general public that Late Mr. Pokhr Singh Memorial Trust through its President Mr. Bhupendra Singh is the Owner of the Land measuring 0.881 hectare, out of Khasra No. 257 min. Situated at Village Himmatpur, Pargana Banta, Tehsil Chandpur, District Bijnor, U.P. through gift deed dated 14-10-2018 doc. No. 15530 executed by Mr. Bhupendra Singh favour of Late Mr. Pokhr Singh Memorial Trust through its President Mr. Bhupendra Singh, in respect of agricultural land measuring 0.881 hectare, out of Khasra Nos. 257 min. Late Mr. Pokhr Singh Memorial Trust through its President Mr. Bhupendra Singh is in the process of mortgaging the said property with Axis Finance Limited. Any objections or concerns regarding this transaction should be raised within a period of 10-days from the date of this public notice. Any objections submitted after the completion of this 10-day period will not be considered binding with respect to the said property or the interests of our client. If anyone wishes to raise an objection, please do so within the stipulated 10-day period by contacting Law Veritas: North (Advocates & Legal Consultants) at Office No. 11, 1st Floor, Building No. A-44/A, Sector-16, Noida, Uttar Pradesh-201301, Landline: +91012-04199711, e-mail: [accounts@lvnorth.in](mailto:accounts@lvnorth.in)

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
It is to bring to the notice of all that the original allottee of residential House/Plot No. B-356, Sector-19, Noida, G. B. Nagar, U.P., Balwant Singh S/o Late Hayat Singh r/o 318, S.T. Colony, Mahroli Road, Delhi had executed a Special Power of Attorney (S.P.A.) on Dt. 31.12.1996 in favour of Smt. K. Thankamma w/o Sh. K. Kesavan R/o 226-C, Pocket A Mayur Vihar, Ph-II, Delhi - 92 which is registered in the office of Sub-Registrar Noida dated: 31/12/1996. Now it is informed to all concern that the transfer of above said property being made in favour of Sh. K. Kesavan S/o K. Thanka r/o B-356, Sector-19, Noida, U.P. If anyone has/have any objection, he/she will submit his/her objection on residential (Housing) Department of Noida Authority within 30 days of the publication of this Notice.

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
Notice is hereby given on behalf of Shri Hashim Ali who is owner of Freehold Residential Vacant Plot No. 18 area measuring 80 Sq. yds. i.e. 50.16 Sq. mtrs. Out of Khasra No. 335, Situated at Block-A, Vidya Vihar, Village Chhipyana Bujurg, District Gautam Budh Nagar, U.P. having acquired the same vide Sale Deed Registration No. 24171, Book No. I, Page Nos. 15-38, Volume No. 27305, Dated 08.05.2024 (SRO-Dadri) now Shri Hashim Ali and Smt. Munaka Khatoon intend to mortgage the subject property for the financial assistance from UJJIVAN SMALL FINANCE BANK Ltd. That Original Last Page of Sale Deed in favour of Shri Hashim Ali Khatoon Registration No. 6831, Book No. I, Dated 12/05/2020 (SRO-Dadri) has been lost/misplaced/not available. FIR already lodged vide LR No. 95994/2026 dated 11/02/2026 to comply the requirements of BANK/NBFCA, we give this public notice that if any Person having any type of claim/right/interest/creating mortgage over the said property, may inform in writing, at the address mentioned below, about his objections, within 07 days from today, failing which it shall be presumed that the said property is free from all type of Encumbrances/lien etc. Lucum Legal LLP N-161, Ground Floor, Saina Tower, Gautam Nagar Near Vasant Kanti Community Centre, New Delhi-110049 Contact # 011-40045316 & 41667327

## The Pioneer Classified

#### CHANGE OF NAME

I, hitherto known as Sarita Dubey W/o Ishwar Chandra Jha, R/o A-122, Street no.10, Bhajanpura, Garhi Mendu, North East Delhi, Delhi-110053, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Sarita Jha It is certified that have complied with other legal requirements in this connection.

PD(341)C  
I, JC-781381W Nb/Sub Parasharam Malavi, R/o Vill-Khadarwadi, PO & PS-Udyambag, Dist- Belagavi, Karnataka- 590008, have changed my name from Meena P Malvi to Meena Parasharam Malavi, vide affidavit dated 19/02/2026 before Notary Public Delhi

PD(342)C  
I, Yallubai R Malavi, Mother of JC-781381W Nb/Sub Parasharam Malavi, R/o Vill-Khadarwadi, PO & PS-Udyambag, Dist- Belagavi, Karnataka- 590008, have changed my name from Yallubai R Malavi to Yallubai Raghunath Malavi, vide affidavit dated 19/02/2026 before Notary Public Delhi

PD(343)C  
I, Janardhan N Malavi, Mother of JC-781381W Nb/Sub Parasharam Malavi, R/o Vill-Khadarwadi, PO & PS-Udyambag, Dist- Belagavi, Karnataka- 590008, have changed my name from Parvindra Singh Chak to Parvindra Singh, vide affidavit dated 19/02/2026 before Notary Public Delhi

PD(344)C  
I, Champa Bai, Mother of No.14845295L NK/MT Kangle Dhananjay Janardhan R/o Vill&PO-Mahalangi, Teh- Chakur, Distt- Latur, Maharashtra-413513 have changed my name from Champa Bai to Atharv Parasharam Malavi, vide affidavit dated 19/02/2026 before Notary Public Delhi

PD(345)C  
I, Arpita Gupta W/o No.14665439A Hav Indrajit Saha, R/O- 153, Katadanga Road, PO- Fingapur, Dist- 24 Pargana North, W.B.- 743129, have changed my name from Arpita Gupta to Arpita Saha, vide affidavit dated 19/02/2026 before Notary Public Delhi.

PD(346)C  
I, Arpita Saha, vide affidavit dated 19/02/2026 before Notary Public Delhi

PD(347)C  
I, Yallubai R Malavi, Mother of JC-781381W Nb/Sub Parasharam Malavi, R/o Vill-Khadarwadi, PO & PS-Udyambag, Dist- Belagavi, Karnataka- 590008, have changed my name from Yallubai R Malavi to Yallubai Raghunath Malavi, vide affidavit dated 19/02/2026 before Notary Public Delhi

PD(348)C  
I, Janardhan N Malavi, Mother of JC-781381W Nb/Sub Parasharam Malavi, R/o Vill-Khadarwadi, PO & PS-Udyambag, Dist- Belagavi, Karnataka- 590008, have changed my name from Parvindra Singh Chak to Parvindra Singh, vide affidavit dated 19/02/2026 before Notary Public Delhi

PD(349)C  
I, Champa Bai, Mother of No.14845295L NK/MT Kangle Dhananjay Janardhan R/o Vill&PO-Mahalangi, Teh- Chakur, Distt- Latur, Maharashtra-413513 have changed my name from Champa Bai to Atharv Parasharam Malavi, vide affidavit dated 19/02/2026 before Notary Public Delhi

PD(350)C  
I, Arpita Saha, vide affidavit dated 19/02/2026 before Notary Public Delhi

PD(351)C  
I, SUMIT KUMAR S/O SATISH KUMAR R/O H.NO. 81, GALI BHOGAL WALLI, VILLAGE JOHRIPUR, DAYALPUR, NORTH EAST DELHI-110094 have changed the name of my minor son KAINAV HALDWANI aged 03 years and she shall hereafter be known as VATSAL HALDWANI.

PD(352)C  
I, hitherto known as BEENU RANI ALIAS BEENU DUA D/O HARBANS LAL ARORA W/O LATE PARMOD DUA R/O A-114, SUDERSHAN PARK, WEST DELHI, DELHI-110015 havechanged my name and shall hereafter be known as BEENU DUA.

PD(353)C  
I, Rahul (old name) S/o Mahender Singh R/o RZ-305/14, F/E, Tughlakabad Extn, Alaknanda, South Delhi, Delhi-110019 declare that I have changed my name from Rahul to Rahul Kashyap. Henceforth, I shall be known and addressed as Rahul Kashyap as all purposes.

PD(349)C  
I, Arpita Saha, vide affidavit dated 19/02/2026 before Notary Public Delhi

PD(345)C  
I, Yallubai R Malavi, Mother of JC-781381W Nb/Sub Parasharam Malavi, R/o Vill-Khadarwadi, PO & PS-Udyambag, Dist- Belagavi, Karnataka- 590008, have changed my name from Yallubai R Malavi to Yallubai Raghunath Malavi, vide affidavit dated 19/02/2026 before Notary Public Delhi

PD(346)C  
I, Janardhan N Malavi, Mother of JC-781381W Nb/Sub Parasharam Malavi, R/o Vill-Khadarwadi, PO & PS-Udyambag, Dist- Belagavi, Karnataka- 590008, have changed my name from Parvindra Singh Chak to Parvindra Singh, vide affidavit dated 19/02/2026 before Notary Public Delhi

PD(347)C  
I, Champa Bai, Mother of No.14845295L NK/MT Kangle Dhananjay Janardhan R/o Vill&PO-Mahalangi, Teh- Chakur, Distt- Latur, Maharashtra-413513 have changed my name from Champa Bai to Atharv Parasharam Malavi, vide affidavit dated 19/02/2026 before Notary Public Delhi

PD(348)C  
I, Arpita Saha, vide affidavit dated 19/02/2026 before Notary Public Delhi

PD(349)C  
I, Champa Bai, Mother of No.14845295L NK/MT Kangle Dhananjay Janardhan R/o Vill&PO-Mahalangi, Teh- Chakur, Distt- Latur, Maharashtra-413513 have changed my name from Champa Bai to Atharv Parasharam Malavi, vide affidavit dated 19/02/2026 before Notary Public Delhi

PD(350)C  
I, Arpita Saha, vide affidavit dated 19/02/2026 before Notary Public Delhi

PD(351)C  
I, SUMIT KUMAR S/O SATISH KUMAR R/O H.NO. 81, GALI BHOGAL WALLI, VILLAGE JOHRIPUR, DAYALPUR, NORTH EAST DELHI-110094 have changed the name of my minor son KAINAV HALDWANI aged 03 years and she shall hereafter be known as VATSAL HALDWANI.

PD(352)C  
I, hitherto known as BEENU RANI ALIAS BEENU DUA D/O HARBANS LAL ARORA W/O LATE PARMOD DUA R/O A-114, SUDERSHAN PARK, WEST DELHI, DELHI-110015 havechanged my name and shall hereafter be known as BEENU DUA.

PD(353)C  
I, Rahul (old name) S/o Mahender Singh R/o RZ-305/14, F/E, Tughlakabad Extn, Alaknanda, South Delhi, Delhi-110019 declare that I have changed my name from Rahul to Rahul Kashyap. Henceforth, I shall be known and addressed as Rahul Kashyap as all purposes.

It is for general information that I KRITIKA YADAV D/o SATYENDRA SINGH YADAV R/O Tower-30, Flat no 1701, Lotus Bulvard, Sector-100, Noida, Gautam Buddha Nagar, U.P. 201301, declare that name of mine has been wrongly written as KRITIKA YADAV in my Passport No. X5732393. The actual name of mine is KRITIKA YADAV respectively, which may be amended accordingly.

PD(354)C  
I, hitherto known as BEENU RANI ALIAS BEENU DUA D/O HARBANS LAL ARORA W/O LATE PARMOD DUA R/O A-114, SUDERSHAN PARK, WEST DELHI, DELHI-110015 havechanged my name and shall hereafter be known as BEENU DUA.

PD(355)C  
I, Rahul (old name) S/o Mahender Singh R/o RZ-305/14, F/E, Tughlakabad Extn, Alaknanda, South Delhi, Delhi-110019 declare that I have changed my name from Rahul to Rahul Kashyap. Henceforth, I shall be known and addressed as Rahul Kashyap as all purposes.

It is for general information that I KRITIKA YADAV D/o SATYENDRA SINGH



## PROSPECT

### Assam rifles flags off "The Eastern Edge Expedition" from Pangsau pass to Jorhat



Assam Rifles flagged off "The Eastern Edge Expedition" on 18 February 2026 from Pangsau Pass, Arunachal Pradesh to Jorhat, Assam, in partnership with Hero MotoCorp. The rally scheduled for 18 February 2026 to 02 March 2026 under Operation Sadbhavana 2025-26, celebrates resilience, camaraderie and the indomitable spirit of the Northeast. The expedition aims to showcase the breathtaking landscapes, vibrant culture and immense potential of the region while fostering unity and national integration. Covering challenging terrains and remote routes, the rally stands as a tribute to the endurance and determination that define both the Armed Forces and the people of the Northeast.

The rally is being undertaken by a contingent of 24 bikers, comprising 12 representatives from Assam Rifles and 12 representatives from Hero MotoCorp, symbolising strong teamwork and civil-military cooperation. Through this collaboration, the initiative reflects a robust partnership to promote adventure tourism, youth engagement and regional connectivity while strengthening bonds between the Armed Forces and corporate partners.

### New Delhi road safety declaration targets 50% cut in fatalities by 2030

The New Delhi Road Safety Declaration was released on Thursday at the National Road Safety Confluence held at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi.

Aligned with the WHO Decade of Action for Road Safety (2021-2030), the Declaration commits stakeholders to measurable, accountable action to reduce road deaths and serious injuries by at least 50 per cent by 2030, with a long-term goal of achieving zero preventable road fatalities in India. The inaugural session was graced by Dr Mats-Ake Belin, Global Lead - Decade of Action for Road Safety, World Health Organisation (WHO), who stated: "Road safety is now firmly on the global agenda, with strong political and media attention.

Our responsibility is to move beyond awareness and ensure consistent, evidence-based implementation so that no country is left behind in preventing road traffic deaths." V Umashankar, Secretary (Road Transport and Highways), Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, Government of India, emphasised: "As a nation, we cannot accept road fatalities as inevitable.

Each accident is personal; each loss preventable. Awareness is not enough - what we need is organised, district-level action, backed by certainty of enforcement and supported by strong institutions. When compliance becomes habit and accountability becomes certain, road safety will move from intention to impact."

## IRCTC blocks 3.03 crore fake IDs to curb fraud, launches new UI

ABHISHEK SONKAR  
New Delhi

The Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) has blocked 3.03 crore suspicious user IDs in 2025 to prevent misuse of the online booking system and to curb potential fraudulent bookings in Tatkal ticket booking. To provide a seamless booking experience, IRCTC has introduced Aadhaar-linked rules for Tatkal and Advance Reservation Period bookings.

IRCTC has introduced significant user interface (UI) enhancements on its rail-ticket-booking website, www.irctc.co.in, and the IRCTC Rail Connect mobile application.

The new interface features a cleaner design, intuitive navigation, and quicker loading times. Passengers can now book tickets more easily, thanks to Aadhaar verification, which prevents misuse and ensures fair allocation.

To further strengthen the robustness and reliability of the ticketing platform, IRCTC has implemented security measures, including a Content Delivery Network (CDN) and Anti-BOT technology, to filter out malicious traffic and improve server response times.

Additionally, 4.86 crore suspicious user IDs have been placed under revalidation, and 12,819 suspicious email



domains have been blocked. The corporation has also reported 3.99 lakh suspicious PNRs on the National Cyber Crime Portal, further strengthening its anti-fraud mechanisms.

These measures are expected to significantly improve the overall ticket booking experience, making it faster, simpler, and more secure for millions of railway passengers.

With the elimination of fake profiles and enhanced security, genuine passengers can now book tickets with ease.

The IRCTC's citizen-first approach is likely to benefit passengers, making ticket booking a hassle-free experience. The introduction of Aadhaar-

based verification has effectively prevented the creation and operation of unauthorised user accounts, acting as a safeguard against misuse.

This has ensured fair allocation of Tatkal and ARP tickets, significantly improving ticket availability for genuine passengers. IRCTC's efforts to strengthen cyber security and implement Aadhaar-based bookings are aimed at providing a smooth and secure booking experience for genuine passengers.

Overall, IRCTC's initiatives are expected to bring a smile to the faces of genuine railway passengers, making ticket booking a seamless and enjoyable experience.

## REC showcases first live demonstration of peer-to-peer energy trading pilot at India AI Impact Summit 2026

P2P demo presented to hon'ble power minister at REC pavilion

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
New Delhi

REC Limited, a Maharatna Central Public Sector Enterprise under the Ministry of Power, today showcased the first live demonstration of India's Peer-to-Peer (P2P) energy trading pilot program under the India Energy Stack at the India AI Impact Summit 2026, held at Bharat Mandapam.

The demonstration was presented during a strategic session titled "India Energy Stack (IES) and the AI-Ready Power Sector: Trust, Interoperability, and Scale," marking a significant milestone in India's transition towards a decentralised, consumer-centric digital power ecosystem.

The highlight of the session was a first-of-its-kind live



demonstration of a P2P decentralised energy transaction conducted under the India Energy Stack framework. Arun Singh, a farmer from Meerut (Uttar Pradesh), used a secure, blockchain-enabled platform to sell surplus solar-generated electricity directly to Lakshmi, a garment shop owner in Delhi.

Arun sold 6 units of solar power and earned ₹30. This

historic transaction demonstrated the real-world application of the India Energy Stack (IES), a Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) designed to empower citizens as active 'energy agents' rather than passive recipients of electricity. The live P2P energy trading demonstration represents the most visible and tangible application of the India Energy

Stack to date. The pilot enables prosumers - households, businesses, and farmers who generate renewable energy - to directly trade their surplus power with other consumers through trusted digital protocols, laying the foundation for a more participative and decentralised power market.

The live demonstration took place in the presence of Dr Ram Sewak Sharma, Chair, India Energy Stack; Shri Jitendra Srivastava, Chairman and Managing Director, REC Limited; Ashish Kumar Goel, Chairman, UPPCL; Alok Kumar, Director General, AIDA; Reji Pillai, President, ISGF; Shashank Misra, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Power; Prince Dhawan, Executive Director, REC; and Smt Swetha Ravi Kumar, Executive Director, FSR Global.

## Naxalism drawing its last breaths: CRPF DG

TONY DAS  
Guwahati

Asserting that Naxalism is drawing its last breaths, CRPF Director General GP Singh on Thursday said the menace will be eradicated from the country by March as announced by Home Minister Amit Shah.

Addressing the DG's Parade of the force in Guwahati, he said decisive steps have been taken by the CRPF in joint operations with other security agencies against Naxalites in the last year.

"In the operations against Naxals, we have achieved unprecedented success. Decisive steps have been taken in the joint operations with other security agencies," he said, highlighting the role of the General Duty Battalion and CoBRA Commandos of the CRPF in it.

"Naxalism is drawing its last breaths. Through our joint operations, Naxalism is mostly over. It is on its way to be eradicated by March 2026, as announced by our Union Home minister," Singh said.

and order in the region. "Our force has been able to win the trust of the people in the region as a neutral agency," he said.

The DG recalled the personnel martyred in the line of duty and affirmed the support of the CRPF for the families of the deceased.

He also dwelt on the measures being pursued by the force for the physical and mental well-being of the personnel and welfare of the families, including addressing healthcare needs.

Singh presented 61 medals, eight trophies and one citation on the occasion. The best Forward Operating Base among those established in Naxal-affected areas over the past year also received a citation from the Director General.

The parade was commanded by Deepak Daundiyal, a commandant-level officer.

The contingent commanders of the sectors were officers of the rank of assistant commandant. The DG's Parade was held ahead of the Force's 87th Anniversary Parade, which will be attended by Shah on Saturday, with both events being conducted in the North East for the first time. During the Anniversary Day Parade, 26 awards, including six Distinguished Service Medals and five trophies, will be presented by the Union Home Minister.

Shah will also honour the best battalions of the three theatres with trophies where the CRPF is deployed.



DG CRPF, GP Singh, IPS, paid solemn homage to the 2,270 brave martyrs of CRPF at Sarusajai Stadium in Guwahati

# India AI summit: Narendra Modi's blueprint for governing intelligence



With the India AI Summit kicking off with much anticipation, the gathering carries the unmistakable imprint of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's decade-long mission: to ensure that technology serves people rather than rules them.

The Summit attempts something ambitious: to define how artificial intelligence should be governed before it governs us.

For Prime Minister Narendra Modi, this moment is not sudden. It is the logical extension of a decade-long digital experiment that has already reshaped daily life for 1.4 billion people.

**Consider the scale:**

- Over 10 billion UPI transactions every month power everything from vegetable carts to multinational supply chains.
- Aadhaar provides biometric identity to more than 1.3 billion residents, enabling direct benefit transfers that have saved billions in leakage.
- CoWIN coordinated nearly two billion vaccine doses during the pandemic, with real-time dashboards accessible from district headquarters to the Union Cabinet.

These are not merely technological platforms. They are governance systems. And now, with artificial intelli-



gence accelerating globally, India is asking a harder question: not just how fast can we build, but how wisely can we deploy?

**From figital infrastructure to AI governance**

Most nations entered the AI race through private-sector innovation. India arrives with something different: Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI). UPI, Aadhaar, DigiLocker, CoWIN, and the Open Network for Digital Commerce form a state-backed yet interoperable ecosystem.

They are public rails upon which private innovation rides. This model is now being studied by countries from Africa to Southeast Asia. AI is the next layer atop this stack. The ₹10,000 crore IndiaAI Mission aims to build:

- Sovereign compute capacity (including GPU clusters accessible to startups and researchers).
- Curated, India-relevant datasets.
- Indigenous foundation models.
- Skilling initiatives targeting millions of youth.

The difference is not only economic ambition-it is regulatory design. Explainability requirements, bias audits, and human oversight are being embedded early, rather than retrofitted after scandal.

Ministers' Meeting in 2023, he cautioned: "AI's potential is immense, but without ethical governance, it risks becoming a tool of exclusion." That warning reflects a deeper philosophical view: tools are powerful, but purpose determines legitimacy.

Ancient Indian texts repeatedly separate instrument from agency. The *Bhagavad Gita* describes the body as a *yantra*-a machine-steered by consciousness. Applied to AI, the analogy is striking: no matter how sophisticated the model, it remains an instrument.

Moral authority resides with the human operator.

This perspective helps explain India's policy stance: AI systems may recommend, but humans must decide.

- In healthcare, AI flags anomalies in radiology scans; doctors confirm diagnoses.
- In courts, algorithms map case backlogs; judges issue rulings.
- In welfare systems, machine learning detects fraud; administrators retain accountability.

The line between augmentation and automation is deliberately guarded.

satellite imagery, weather modelling, and soil data to provide crop advisories in multiple Indian languages through voice interfaces. Pilot programs report yield improvements of 15-20 per cent.

But the technology is advisory, not prescriptive. Farmers retain final choice.

**Healthcare**

Under Ayushman Bharat's digital architecture, electronic health records are gradually integrating predictive analytics. AI assists in early tuberculosis detection and diabetic retinopathy screening in rural clinics where specialists are scarce.

In a country with vast doctor shortages, AI becomes a force multiplier-without replacing the human practitioner.

**Education**

On platforms like DIKSHA, machine learning identifies students struggling with specific competencies. Teachers receive alerts and tailored content recommendations, shifting classrooms from one-size-fits-all instruction to targeted support.

**Competing models: America, China and India**

Globally, AI governance has begun to polarise.

- The United States emphasises market-driven innovation, with regulation emerging incrementally.
- China integrates AI tightly with

state planning, including expansive surveillance capabilities.

- The European Union prioritises precaution through regulatory frameworks like the AI Act.

India is attempting a hybrid path: innovation at scale, public digital rails, democratic oversight, and a strong emphasis on inclusion.

It is not racing to dominate frontier large language models at any cost. Instead, it is investing in vernacular AI for 22 official languages, low-bandwidth solutions for rural areas, and open-source ecosystems. This is strategic.

Nearly 3 billion people globally still lack reliable digital access. If AI only works in English, on high-end devices, with expensive cloud subscriptions, it excludes most of humanity. India's bet is that inclusive design will define the next wave of global adoption.

**The legitimacy question**

As AI systems move toward autonomy-approving loans, recommending parole, selecting military targets-the defining issue becomes legitimacy. Who is accountable when a model discriminates? Who audits training data?

Who owns the data of a billion citizens? India's Digital Personal Data Protection Act asserts citizen rights over personal data.

The National Strategy on AI emphasises transparency in high-risk sectors. The language is consistent: AI must remain explainable, contestable, and accountable.

This approach reflects an older philosophical insight from the Isha Upanishad: knowledge without wisdom leads to peril. Capability alone does not justify deployment.

**The global south is watching**

India's G20 presidency placed Digital Public Infrastructure at the centre of global development discussions. Over 100 countries endorsed a call to collaborate on DPI frameworks.

Now AI extends that conversation. For emerging economies, the question is existential: will AI deepen digital colonialism-where data flows outward and value

accrues elsewhere-or will it empower local innovation?

India positions itself as a bridge. Through partnerships in Africa and Southeast Asia, it shares UPI-like systems and digital identity frameworks.

In AI forums such as the Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI), it advocates capacity-building for developing nations. The message: AI should not widen global inequality.

**Beyond efficiency: A moral architecture**

The Bhagavad Gita defines true knowledge not merely as information, but as humility, restraint, and self-discipline.

This moral vocabulary increasingly enters India's AI rhetoric. An AI model may process billions of parameters. But it cannot weigh dignity. It cannot grasp social nuance. It cannot assume responsibility.

Only human institutions can do that. Modi's recurring formulation-"Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas" (Together with all, development for all, trust of all)-translates in AI terms to inclusion, growth, and trustworthiness.

Trust, ultimately, is the currency of governance.

**A defining moment**

The India AI Summit signals that the country sees itself not merely as a technology adopter, but as a rule-shaper. The prime minister who once championed Digital India now frames AI as the next frontier of statecraft.

His approach rejects both techno-utopian exuberance and reactionary fear. Instead, it proposes stewardship: power balanced by responsibility.

Artificial intelligence will transform economies. That is no longer debated. The deeper question is whether intelligence-artificial or human-will remain subordinate to wisdom.

India is making a case that it can.

**PARADIP PORT AUTHORITY**  
e-TENDER CALL NOTICE  
No:EM/OHP/GW-05/2025/107 Dt:13/02/2026  
e-TCN No.EM/OHP-01/2026

Name of the work: "Design, Manufacture, Supply, Erection & Commissioning of 3200TPH Capacity Shiploader at IOB". Estimated cost: Rs.39,36,81,733/- only. Last date & time of submission of bid: up to 18:00 Hrs. on 20.03.2026. Refer our website <https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app> for details.

Sd/- Executive Engineer (Elec.)  
Iron Ore Handling Plant  
Paradip Port Authority  
PPA/PR/69/2025-2026 dt. 18.02.2026

**Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar Municipal Corporation**  
(Electrical) Section

Contact No: 0240-233356-40 Office Address: Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar Municipal Corporation, (Electrical) Section, Town Hall, Aurangabad, 431001 Email: eeligh@aurangabadmahapalika.org

Name of work	Bid Submission End Date
1. Shifting of MSEDCL DTC, Pole, HT/LT line due to road widening and obstruction to traffic at newly developing roads in Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar (Tender Amount 23,70,51,217/-) by the e-tendering, detailed information (NIT) documents are available on the website <a href="https://www.mahatenders.gov.in">https://www.mahatenders.gov.in</a>	Date: 04.03.2026 Time: 5.00 PM

Pre-Bid Meeting Date 25.02.2026 Time: 11.00 AM  
Location: Administrative Building Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar Municipal Corporation.

Digitally signed by Mohini Sunil Warbhuvan  
Date: 19-02-2026 11:44:26  
Executive Engineer (Electrical)  
Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar Municipal Corporation

## BRIEFLY

### Iconic Ladakh Marathon to return in September



Ladakh Marathon, the world's highest AIMS-certified marathon, will return for its 13th edition on September 10 and will culminate on September 13, the organisers announced on Thursday. One of the most challenging tests of endurance and human capacity in the world, registrations for all six races of the Ladakh Marathon, including the curated Silk Route Ultra (122km) and Khardung La Challenger (72km) ultra races, opened on Thursday and can be applied to through the official website. Beyond the two ultras, the event will feature the Marathon (42km), Half Marathon (21km), 11.2km Run, and the 5km Run for Fun. "Acclimatisation is compulsory for all runners, with ultra runners required to arrive in Leh at least 10 days before race day in order to participate," a press release said. The Khardung La Challenge and Silk Route Ultra remain application-based and strictly capped.

### AFC Champions League Two: Al Nassr reaches quarterfinals



Cristiano Ronaldo was absent as Al Nassr advanced to the quarterfinals of the AFC Champions League Two with a 1-0 win over Arkadag FC of Turkmenistan that secured a 2-0 aggregate victory. The 41-year-old Ronaldo, who returned last Saturday after missing three straight games amid reports of discontent with the club's management, watched from the stands on Wednesday. According to domestic media, the five-time Ballon d'Or winner, who has yet to win a major trophy since signing with the Riyadh club in December 2022, is being rested for Saudi Pro League games and the latter stages of the AFC Champions League. Al Nassr will face Al Wasl of the United Arab Emirates in the first leg of the quarterfinals of Asia's second-tier competition on March 3. In the top-tier AFC Champions League Elite, Japan and South Korea sent three and two teams respectively to the round of 16 in the eastern zone. The top eight from each of the two 12-team groups go to the next stage. Johor Darul Tazim of Malaysia and Buriram United of Thailand also progressed, while Melbourne City became just the second Australian team to reach the round of 16 since 2016. In the western zone, big-spending Saudi Arabian clubs dominated with Al Hilal, Al Ahli and Al Ittihad all finishing in the top four. Tractor of Iran placed third, while Qatar's Al Duhail and Al Sadd advanced along with Al Wahda.

### Mikautadze helps Villarreal tighten grip on third place



ASSOCIATED PRESS  
■ Madrid

Villarreal strengthened its hold on third place in the Spanish league with a 1-0 win at Levante in a match that was initially postponed last year. Georges Mikautadze scored the 57th-minute winner on Wednesday as Villarreal moved three points ahead of fourth-place Atletico Madrid.

## Marseille appoints Habib Beye as new coach

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
■ Marseille (France)

Marseille is looking to reignite its season with a new coach on board. The nine-time French champion appointed Habib Beye to replace Roberto De Zerbi following a bad patch of form that saw the club exit the Champions League and drop 12 points behind Ligue 1 leader Lens.

Beye, a former Senegal international who played for Marseille, will be in charge of Friday's trip to Brest. After leading Red Star to promotion to Ligue 2, Beye spent the last year and a half as the Rennes coach. The club sacked Beye this month. Key matchups: Marseille has failed to win its



past three league games, badly damaging its title hopes. The results including a 5-0 mauling at PSG have left fans fuming. The club hopes Beye, a disciplinarian advocating ball possession and a strong attacking identity, will produce a jolt. Beye's hiring "refocuses us on the challenges we still need to tackle between now and the end of the season,"



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
■ Karachi

Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) president Tariq Bugti has resigned from his position in the aftermath of the hotel fiasco during the national team's troubled tour of Australia earlier this month. Bugti on Thursday confirmed that he had sent his resignation to the patron-in-chief of PHF, Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif.

"I have sent my resignation letter to the PM but I urge him and Field Marshal Asim Munir to conduct an impartial inquiry into the whole incident which took place in Australia during the FIH Pro League," Bugti said. The controversy started

when a video surfaced on social media showing Pakistani players standing on the streets of Sydney with their luggage. Soon after the video went

viral, Pakistan hockey captain Shakeel Ammad Butt Released another clip claiming that everything was fine and there were no problems in terms of their stay. But a few days later after returning back Butt criticised the PHF at a press conference in Lahore and held the federation responsible for the mismanagement during the chaotic tour, claiming in another video that the team not only had to wander the streets due to lack of accommodation but also "wash dishes before playing a match." He also claimed that nine players were yet to get their daily allowances from the PSB and PHF for the last one year. The players questioned that when the govern-

ment had given funds to the PHF for the team's participation in all three phases of the FIH Pro League, why they had to suffer for logistical blunders in Australia, where the second phase concluded earlier this week. The criticism, however, cost Butt dearly as Bugti imposed a two-year ban on the skipper for his outburst, saying he brought disrepute to Pakistan hockey. Bugti's resignation comes in explosive times for Pakistan hockey with the PHF and the state-run Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) trading blame at each other for the fiasco. Bugti said that the PSB handled all the arrangements for the Australia tour and it was responsible for the

## Karnataka enter Ranji Trophy final after 11 years

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
■ Lucknow

Karnataka entered the Ranji Trophy final after a hiatus of 11 years, advancing by virtue of a first-innings lead from their drawn semifinal match against Uttarakhand on Thursday. Karnataka will face Jammu and Kashmir in the title clash at Hubballi from February 24.

Resuming the fifth and final day from their overnight 299 for six, Karnataka lost the remaining four wickets quickly to get bowled out for 323 for an overall lead of 826 runs. Uttarakhand fought through fifties by Avneesh Sudha (66), Sachin Rawat (53 not out) and Abhay Negi (57 not), thwarting



Karnataka's ambitions for an outright win. They finished their second innings at 260 for six. However, the massive first-innings lead was enough for them to ensure a passage to the final. Karnataka were pressing for an outright win after reducing Uttarakhand to 156 for six midway through the second session.

But Negi and Rawat hung in there, adding 104 runs for the seventh wicket before both the captains decided to shake hands some 30 minutes after tea. Now, Karnataka will eye their ninth Ranji Trophy title, and the last of which came in the 2014-15 season under the leadership of R Vinay Kumar. In fact, Karnataka had then achieved the rare distinction of

becoming the second domestic side after Mumbai to win all three titles twice in as many seasons. Following their success in the 2013-14 season, Karnataka grabbed the Ranji, Irani and Vijay Hazare trophies in the 2014-15 season as well. Robin Uthappa led the run-chart with 912 runs, while Vinay was the leading wicket-taker, along with Mumbai's Shardul Thakur — 48 wickets. KL Rahul, Karun Nair, Mayank Agarwal and Shreyas Gopal are the only four survivors in the current Karnataka squad from that period of dominance. On the other hand, Jammu and Kashmir will eye their maiden Ranji title, having reached the final for the first time in six decades.

## Arsenal blows 2-goal lead at Wolves

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
■ Wolverhampton (England)

Arsenal blew a two-goal lead at last-place Wolves to give a huge boost to Manchester City in the race for the Premier League title.

The league leader was held to a surprise 2-2 draw at Molineux on Wednesday, having led 2-0 in the second half. Teenage debutant Tom Edozie scored in the fourth minute of added time to complete Wolves' comeback. "There was a big difference in how we played in the first half and the second half. We dropped our standards and we got punished for it," Arsenal forward Bukayo Saka told the BBC. The draw means Arsenal



has dropped points in back-to-back games and leaves it just five ahead of second-place City, having played a game more. With the top two still to play each other at City's Etihad Stadium, the title race

is too close to call. "It's time to focus on ourselves, improve our standards and improve our performances and it is in our control," Saka said. Arsenal has led the way for the majority of the season

and one bookmaker paid out on Mikel Arteta's team winning the title after it opened up a nine-point lead earlier this month.

But Wednesday's result was the latest sign that it is feeling the pressure, having finished runner-up in each of the last three seasons. It has won just two of its last seven league games.

Having blown a lead against Brentford last week, it was even worse at a Wolves team that has won just one game all season.

Victory looked all but secured after Saka gave Arsenal the lead with a header in the fifth minute and Piero Hincapie ran through to blast in the second in the 56th.

## Russell outpaces PIAstri and Leclerc at Formula 1 testing in Bahrain

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
■ Sakhir (Bahrain)

Mercedes driver George Russell was fastest on the first day of Formula 1's final testing event ahead of the new season, edging McLaren's Oscar PIAstri and Ferrari's Charles Leclerc.

In the afternoon session at the Bahrain International Circuit on Wednesday, Russell had a time of 1:33.459, surpassing PIAstri's 1:33.739 achieved in the morning. Leclerc finished 0.28 behind the leader.

"Overall, it has been a productive day," PIAstri said. "My running in the afternoon felt solid and we made good progress. I am feeling more comfortable with each lap, so I am looking forward

to getting back out on the track tomorrow afternoon." World champion Lando Norris was half a second back in fourth place.

"We got some good laps under our belts this morning, working through varying runs and getting more comfortable in the car," Norris said. "We're learning more each day. But there are still a lot of things to get our heads around, so we'll keep putting the car through its paces in the last two days of testing."

It is the second three-day testing event to be held in Bahrain this year ahead of the opening race of the season in Australia next month.

The teams tested their new cars earlier in the year at the Circuit de Barcelona-Catalunya. Regulation



changes have made cars smaller and lighter, with key roles being the charging of an on-board battery and using electrical energy to boost

speed. The FIA, Formula 1's governing body, said "regulations were agreed" following meetings of the F1 Commission and the F1

Power Unit Advisory Committee. "In common with the introduction of such significant regulatory changes, there are still collective learnings to be taken from pre-season testing," read a statement on the F1 Commission meeting.

"Topics covered included overall car characteristics, energy and power unit, aerodynamics, overtaking and racing, tyres and mechanical grip. It was agreed that no immediate major regulatory changes were required given that initial evidence and feedback remains immature and that premature change carried the risk of increased instability ahead of the first race. "Further reviews will be carried out once more data becomes available." Max

Verstappen, who last week said the new cars are no fun to drive and that the series no longer feels like F1, sat out both sessions. Red Bull teammate Isack Hadjar finished sixth fastest despite managing just 13 laps in the morning session with a water system issue.

Verstappen will be involved in a full session on Thursday. "We had a slow start to the day with low mileage in the morning after losing pressure in one of the coolant circuits," Hadjar said. "We made the most of the afternoon with a really packed programme, and I feel better than last week already with the car." Aston Martin's Fernando Alonso was limited to 28 laps due to a power unit issue in the morning session.

## Inter Milan stunned

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
■ Milan

Tiny BodÅ/Glimt produced another Champions League shock by stunning last year's beaten finalist Inter Milan 3-1 in the playoffs.

The Norwegian underdog followed up back-to-back wins against Manchester City and Atletico Madrid by securing a two-goal advantage going into next week's second leg in Milan on Wednesday. Anthony Gordon scored four goals in the first half as Newcastle routed Qarabag 6-1. Atletico drew 3-3 away to Club Brugge and Bayer Leverkusen has a 2-0 lead after its first leg at Olympiacos.

BodÅ/Glimt's latest upset: BodÅ/Glimt is fast becoming the unlikely story of this season's Champions League, producing one upset after another. After booking its place in the playoffs with wins against City and Atletico, it strengthened its chances of advancing to the round of 16 with victory against Italian league leader Inter.

Sondre Fet put the home team ahead after collecting Kasper Hogn's backheel in

the 20th minute. Francesco Pio Esposito equalized before the break, but BodÅ/Glimt took control in the second half.

Hogn produced a second assist to set up Jens Petter Hauge in the 61st and then got a goal himself three minutes later. "I feel amazing, just thankful to play with this team. I'm happy that I could help the team by making assists and scoring a goal. I play in a good team, so that's nice," Hogn said. Inter was a beaten finalist in two of the last three seasons, but now faces a major test to advance to the next round.

"A bad result for us and a bad night for us, but we need to stay calm and believe that we can win at home," Inter midfielder Petar Susic said.

Rampant Newcastle: Newcastle was 5-0 up by halftime against Qarabag in Azerbaijan and, barring an unlikely collapse in the second leg at home, is cruising into the round of 16.

Gordon completed his hat trick in 33 minutes at the Tofik Bakhramov Stadium in Baku and got a fourth in first-half added time.



## Bennett, Raza power Zimbabwe to 6-wicket win over Sri Lanka

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
**Colombo**

Brian Bennett's measured fifty and Sikandar Raza's raw power propelled Zimbabwe to a facile six-wicket win over a fancied Sri Lanka as the Africans entered the Super Eights of the T20 World Cup with a clean slate on Thursday.

Chasing 179 on a rather sluggish surface, Zimbabwe needed pragmatism and force in equal measure, and those elements were offered to them by Bennett (63 not out, 48 balls) and Raza (45, 26b) respectively.

Zimbabwe scaled down the target in 19.3 overs. Both teams have already

entered the Super Eights from Group B, and the African outfit can be proud of their show in the group phase, as they also had defeated Australia in an earlier match.

The African side started quite well, reaching 55 for no loss in the Power Play segment, thanks to openers Bennett and Tadi Marumani (34, 26b). In all, they added 69 runs for the first wicket in 8.3 overs before Marumani fell to Dunieth Wellalage, offering the left-arm spinner a return catch. Ryan Burl ensured that Zimbabwe did not lose the initial momentum, making a quick 12-23, and the highlight was a massive 103-metre six off Wellalage over long-on. Burl perished to a slower

bouncer by pacer Dasun Shanaka, but the arrival of Raza changed the complexion of the match.

Bennett reached his fifty in 41 balls, but Zimbabwe needed some muscle in their chase. Raza pummelled pacer Dilshan Madushanka for two sixes in a row, followed by a four in the 15th over to give his side some steam.

The skipper, who suffered cramps in the later part of his innings, then clouted a six and four off spinner Maheesh Theekshana in the 16th over as Zimbabwe brought down the asking rate to 6.5.

Raza was ousted by Dushan Hemantha in the 19th over, and they lost Tashinga Musekiwa two balls



later, leaving the visitors to score 8 off the last over.

But a huge pulled six by Tony Munyonga off Theekshana erased all the worries in the Zimbabwe camp. Earlier, SL batters struggled against Zimbabwe spinners in the middle overs on a slow pitch but reached a par 178 for seven.

Opting to bat first, Sri Lanka got off to a reasonable start with openers Kusal Perera (22) and Pathum Nissanka (62) adding 54 runs in 4.5 overs. The left-handed Perera did not look comfortable but found a couple of boundaries off pacer Blessing Muzarabani.

But he fell to the towering pacer Sun. Perera could not

impart placement to his pull shot off a Muzarabani bouncer, getting caught by Graeme Cremer at short fine leg. Muzarabani was also quite impressive on the day, tucking the ball into the pitch to take the pace off to keep the batters waiting.

The Lankans still ended the power play at a satisfactory 61 for 1, but found the scoring tough in the subsequent phase. Zimbabwe spinners - Raza, Cremer, Burl and Wellington Masakadza - did not give any wriggle room for the home batters, as the next four overs produced just 21 runs. They also lost the slow-moving Kusal Mendis (14, 20b) during this time.

In between, Nissanka, fresh

from his unbeaten 100 against Australia in the previous match, completed his fifty in 34 balls. The tiny right-hander judged the pace of the pitch beautifully and focused on taking quick singles and doubles and only freed his arms at the most opportune moment.

But eventually, Nissanka also fell to the slowness of the track, a reverse sweep off Cremer ending in the hands of Tony Munyonga.

The talented Pavan Rathnayake (44, 25b) creamed Brad Evans for 4, 6, and 4 in the 19th over to push SL past the 150-run mark before perishing in the same over. The last two overs produced 30 runs.



## Shivam Dube: India's silent hero this T20 World Cup

**BHARAT SHARMA**  
**Ahmedabad**

India all-rounder Shivam Dube is rapidly enhancing his credentials as a premier power-hitter with impactful performances in the ongoing T20 World Cup.

After crucial cameos on tricky pitches against Namibia and Pakistan, Dube overcame a slow start to provide much-needed momentum to India's innings in the middle overs against the Netherlands here on Wednesday.

Tested by off-spinner Aryan Dutt initially and managing six off his first 11 balls, Dube stepped on the accelerator to end with a match-winning 31-ball 66, including half a dozen sixes.

Playing in his second T20 World Cup, Dube was always known for his six-hitting prowess against the spinners, but now he has made himself equally effective against the pacers.

His improved play against fast bowlers was on display against the Netherlands as he

read the pace variations well from the hand of Logan van Beek to dispatch him for three maximums.

Dube's game against the short ball has improved by a few notches, and he credits it to the hard yards he put in after moving to Chennai Super Kings in the IPL.

Such is his conviction that he doesn't get fazed by a few dot balls, as he knows the big hits will come eventually.

"Yes, obviously, when you play dot balls in T20, you get pressure. But as a player, as a batsman, I know at that time that maybe right now I am at 2 runs in 10 balls, but in the next 5 balls, if I hit 2 sixes, it will be covered.

"So that thing always stays in my mind. Yes, the wicket was gone, so it is important that we have to build a partnership, so for that, even if 2-4 balls are hit, it is fine, but later it gets covered," said Dube after bagging the player of the match award. He attributed his success also to getting more game time in pressure situations. (PTI)

## West Indies brush aside Italy by 42 runs to sign off group stage on high

**TAPAN MOHANTA**  
**Kolkata**

Shai Hope's second consecutive fifty and a disciplined performance by bowlers powered West Indies to a comfortable 42-run victory over Italy, signing off their Group C campaign in the T20 World Cup in style Thursday. Despite a shaky batting performance, the Caribbean pace and spin attack clicked in unison, ensuring a winning momentum heading into the Super Eights.

Set a target of 166, Italy were bowled out for 123 in 18 overs, with Matthew Forde (3/19), Shamar Joseph (4/30) and Gudakesh Motie (2/24) doing the bulk of the damage with the ball for the West Indies. Skipper Hope slammed a 46-ball 75 to guide



West Indies to 165/6 after Italy opted to field.

Hope's fluent knock with six fours and four sixes held the innings together, but experienced spinners Ben Manenti (2/37) and Crishan Kalugamage (2/25) choked the run flow in the back end to keep the total in check.

On a batting-friendly Eden surface with a lightning outfield, where England's 202 was nearly chased down by Italy in the previous game,

the target looked underwhelming at the innings break. But West Indies' bowlers got the job done without much hassle.

Young pace-bowling all-rounder Forde, who had conceded just 10 runs and taken a wicket against Nepal in Mumbai, set the tone in the powerplay with another tidy spell. He was exceptional with the new ball, returning figures of 2/17 in three overs.

Forde struck in his first over as Justin Mosca was bowled for 2, done in by an inductor. He then removed Syed Naqvi with a hard-length delivery that shaped away as the batter tried to smash and was caught at mid-off.

Shamar Joseph was the pick of the bowlers, using the

short-ball strategy smartly. He ended Italy's resistance by taking the key wicket of Grant Stewart in the 15th over, effectively sealing the contest.

Wily left-arm spinner Motie was outstanding in the middle overs. He foxed the batters with his guile, keeping scoreboard pressure intact and removing JJ Smuts (24) and the in-form Ben (26) just when they were looking to accelerate.

At the halfway stage, with Ben at the crease, the chase still looked possible. But Italy kept losing wickets after the early blows from Forde.

The successive dismissals of Stewart and Manenti — who had shared a blistering 92-run standoff off 48 balls against England - hurt them badly. (PTI)

## Australia set to conduct forensic review of disastrous T20 WC campaign

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
**Melbourne**

Former champions Australia are set to conduct a "forensic review" of their disappointing T20 World Cup campaign after the injury-ravaged team crashed out in the group stage of the ongoing event being co-hosted by India and Sri Lanka.

The 2021 champions exited after losing to Sri Lanka and minnows Zimbabwe. They still have one match remaining against Oman in Pallekele on Friday, but that would be inconsequential.

Zimbabwe and Sri Lanka



have progressed to the Super Eights as Australia failed to get past the group stage for the first time since

2009. Selector Tony Dodemaide said a full review of the performance would be done once the players are back home.

"It's really disappointing the way the tournament has rolled out," Dodemaide was quoted as saying by cricket.Com.Au.

"But we will need some time, and take some time, once we finish our last commitment — it's important that we finish strongly on Friday against Oman, and then we'll get back and analyse it fully." The team was without its front-line pace attack after injuries forced Pat Cummins and Josh Hazlewood to skip the tournament, while Mitchell Starc announced his international retirement from the format.



## Afghanistan crush Canada by 82 runs

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
**Chennai**

Ibrahim Zadran struck a fluent unbeaten 95 while Mohammed Nabi took four wickets for just seven runs as Afghanistan signed off from the T20 World Cup with a comprehensive 82-run victory over Canada, here Thursday.

Canada signed off without a win from the tournament while Afghanistan had their second win. The Rashid-Khan led side was clearly the better team and had it won the cliffhanger against South Africa, the side would have avoided an early elimination.

In a battle of pride between two already-eliminated sides, Afghanistan rode on a blazing unbeaten knock from Zadran to post a formidable 200 for four and then restricted Canada to 118 for 8 to seal an emphatic win.

With both teams aiming to return home on a high, Afghanistan produced a commanding batting effort after being sent in to bat.

Canada's chase never really gathered momentum after captain Dilpreet Bajwa's brief

13 off seven ended in the third over.

They slipped to 33 for three inside six overs, with Mohammad Nabi striking crucial blows, including the wickets of Yuvraj Samra (17) and Nicholas Kirton (10).

Off-spinner Mujeeb Ur Rahman removed Bajwa, while Azmatullah Omarzai accounted for Navneet Dhaliwal as Afghanistan tightened the screws early.

Harsh Thaker (30) and Saad Bin Zafar (28) attempted a rein job with a 53-run stand for the sixth wicket, but Afghanistan's spin duo ensured there was no comeback.

Nabi returned remarkable figures of 4 for 7 in four overs, while skipper Rashid Khan chipped in with two wickets.

With wickets falling at regular intervals and the required run rate soaring, Canada folded meekly to hand Afghanistan a comprehensive win to close their campaign.

Earlier, Zadran rode on a spilled catch to punish the Canada bowlers with seven fours and five sixes, leading Afghanistan to a big total.

## India need to tackle top-order predictability, finger spin struggles

**BHARAT SHARMA**  
**Ahmedabad**

India's assistant coach Ryan ten Doeschate has acknowledged two pressing issues facing the team heading into the Super 8s of the T20 World Cup: the predictability of the left-handed top order and the batters' struggles against finger spinners.

Speaking to select media after the win over the Netherlands in their final league fixture, Doeschate said the overwhelming title contenders have not played a perfect game yet.

With India's top three being left-handers, including Abhishek Sharma, Ishan Kishan and Tilak Varma, he also conceded that it has made it easier for opposition

teams to plan against them.

Rival teams have been employing off-spinners in the powerplay to contain the top order comprising Sharma, who has not scored a run in the tournament so far after being in the form of his life not so long ago.

Netherlands off-spinner Aryan Dutt bowled three overs in the powerplay on Wednesday and removed Sharma and Kishan.

Doeschate feels India don't have an off-spin issue per se, and it is the overall play against the finger spinners that needs major improvement. The home team will need to find a way to deal with finger spinners in their Super 8 games against South Africa, Zimbabwe and the West Indies.



"It has (made it easier for teams to plan against India). We don't have many options (in the top three). We've got Sanju sitting on the side, and we feel on balance, particularly with the games coming up.

If we look at what finger spin is, we are going to come up against New Zealand.

"We've got a few guys who bowl finger spin, and so do the West Indies, and so does South Africa if you include

Markram. But on balance, we still feel that these are our best batters, and we're going to make do with the abundance of left-handers," said Doeschate.

Onus on batters to find a way: Namibia captain Gerhard Erasmus had foxed the Indian batters with his round-arm off-spin in Delhi before Pakistan's Usman Tariq, Salman Agha and Saim Ayub were able to put the arch-rivals under pressure in Colombo.

Doeschate said batters need to find a way against finger spinners when the ball is holding a bit.

"I wouldn't say off-spin; I'd say finger spin," said the assistant coach about the areas of improvement going into the next phase of the ICC event.

"If you take the combined,

I think Pakistan bowled 14 overs of finger spin in the last game, and off the top of my head I want to say something like 4 for 78 or something like that. So it's not great numbers."

Colombo was a particularly difficult wicket, and I think the numbers tonight got sort of improved towards the back end. But again, Aryan Dutt bowling four overs is a big challenge.

"I think these two venues in particular, with the bigger boundary here (Ahmedabad) and obviously a slower wicket in Colombo, sort of do exaggerate that. But it's something we're going to have to focus on, like I said, with the amount of finger spin we're going to get in the next three games," said Doeschate. (PTI)

## Stop playing big shots across the line initially: Gavaskar tells Abhishek

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
**Ahmedabad**

The legendary Sunil Gavaskar believes Abhishek Sharma is struggling to cope with the weight of expectations in the ongoing T20 World Cup and wants the big-hitting opener to avoid playing across the line at the start of his innings.

Entering the tournament as the top-ranked T20I batter, Abhishek is experiencing a



significant slump in form, having registered three consecutive ducks.

"Abhishek Sharma is a lovely guy, but expectations seem to be weighing on him.

If he had started well against the USA, it would have been different. Now, the pressure of being the big six-hitter and top batter is showing.

"With his shot range, he needs to spend time in the middle. He cannot try to hit a boundary or six on the first ball of his innings. If the big shots come, fine. But he shouldn't force himself to play the big shots across the line," Gavaskar said on Star Sports.

## Bas de Leede urges big teams to visit Netherlands for warm-ups

**BHARAT SHARMA**  
**Ahmedabad**

The prospect of associate teams playing the Test nations outside of ICC events remains improbable in the foreseeable future, and Netherlands all-rounder Bas de Leede is mindful of that reality.

Following the conclusion of their T20 World Cup campaign with a loss to India here on Wednesday, de Leede joined the chorus

of players urging the authorities to organise more games against the full members, albeit with a pragmatic twist.

The Dutch have no cricket lined up until June. De Leede, son of former Netherlands international Tim de Leede, proposed that teams like India and Australia tour the Netherlands for a warm-up game or two ahead of their big-ticket assignments in England.



"The schedules at the moment are pretty crammed already with franchise leagues and the future tours programme of the ICC. So, I think it's hard to schedule full series in against top nations," said de Leede.

"But I think one way that that could potentially be an option is when travelling teams come to England, for example, that there's an option of playing a warm-up in Scotland or a warm-up in

the Netherlands.

"There's ways around that where we still can get exposure of playing against the best teams and they get something out of it as well," he added. He would also love to be part of a tri-series involving England.

"There's obviously a lot of money in big nations, playing big nations, and I get the financial reasoning behind it. But yeah, like you said, tri-nation series could be an option, even for us.